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Official Records

86th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 25 April 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lajčák .... (Slovakia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Brown (Liberia) took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 65 (*continued*)

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

High-level meeting of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/707)

Draft resolution (A/72/L.49)

The Acting President: Before we proceed, I would like to appeal to all speakers to make their interventions brief and concise in order to make maximum use of the limited time we have for this high-level meeting. To enable all on the list of speakers to be heard, statements in plenary meeting should be limited to three minutes when speaking in a national capacity.

As members will recall, in its resolution 71/323, of 8 September 2017, the General Assembly called for strict adherence by each speaker to the time limits in the Assembly, in particular during high-level meetings. Participants with longer statements are encouraged to read a shorter version of their text and to submit their full statements to the Secretariat for posting on the PaperSmart portal.

Also in accordance with resolution 71/323, the "all protocol observed" principle is recommended whereby participants are encouraged to refrain from the listing of standard protocol expressions during their statements.

Bearing in mind the time limit, I would like to appeal to all speakers to deliver their statements at a reasonable pace, so that interpretation into the six official United Nations languages may be provided properly. I therefore appeal for the cooperation of all speakers in observing the time limits for statements so that all those inscribed can be heard in a timely manner.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Adaljiza Albertina Xavier Reis Magno, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste.

Ms. Xavier Reis Magno (Timor-Leste): It is a privilege to be given a chance to voice the views of my country, Timor-Leste, on the peacebuilding and sustaining peace agenda.

I wish to also express the full support of Timor-Leste to the Secretary-General for having initiated the necessary reforms to the management system, the United Nations development system and the peacebuilding architecture so as to make the United Nations fit for purpose and effective in its work on prevention and on sustaining peace.

Timor-Leste believes that sustaining peace requires an integrated framework and at that at the national level there must be ownership and involvement by all sectors of society, in particular women and young people. We have been encouraged by the fact that these factors have been considered and the focus of discussion within the past two days.

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As a country that emerged from violent conflict and understands very well the drivers of conflict, Timor-Leste's approach to sustaining peace has involved developing policies for inclusive and sustainable development.

As a post-conflict country, Timor-Leste has had to reconcile with its painful past by healing wounds and promoting peace with our closest neighbour. National reconciliation and reconciliation with that neighbour have been, in our experience, fundamental to sustaining peace. As stated by our former President, Xanana Gusmão, we first looked within and used our traditional methods to heal and reconcile before we were ready to reach out to and reconcile with the outside.

As we rebuild our country from the ashes, our society is transforming and urbanizing. We have a young population, 70 per cent of which is made up of young people born during the conflict era who had experienced an interrupted education and required special attention, as they will be the next generation and our future. This effort is aimed at securing social resilience for sustainable development and ensuring that our society is conflict-free. This will enable us to focus on socioeconomic development so as to improve the livelihood of our people and fulfil our motto, which is "Good-bye Conflict, Welcome Development". Today we enjoy a vibrant democracy and have constructive international relationships, particularly with our immediate neighbours.

Our national achievements illustrate the fact that peace and development, especially for fragile, conflict-affected countries, can be advanced only when a solid structure has been built, as peace processes do not end once a peace agreement has been signed. High-level political engagement in supporting national efforts to deepen and broaden the processes of inclusion and reconciliation, as well as addressing the underlying causes of conflict, are paramount for a lasting peace, as stated in the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see A/70/95). The structure of the national, regional and global institutions, which were established with goodwill, needed to be dynamized to respond to the challenges of political engagement, targeting common interest instead of individual agendas.

International cooperation and multilateral partnership, such as the structure of the United Nations, needed to be adjusted to the current challenges and be utilized in a way that the available resources are rationally maximized to help the Organization to materialize the mission and vision being charged to it.

In conclusion, allow me to congratulate the current President of the General Assembly for his tenacity in taking action to follow up on the recommendation of the two reports on peacebuilding commissioned by the United Nations, namely, the Brahimi report, of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305), and the Ramos Horta report, of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (A/70/95).

Mr. Pahad (South Africa): South Africa welcomes the convening of this high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The importance of this matter in pursuit of the central mandate of the United Nations cannot be overestimated. We appreciate the work of Secretary-General in bringing peacebuilding and sustaining peace to the forefront of the attention of the United Nations, and we welcome the report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace (A/72/707). South Africa is certain that this high-level meeting will make a meaningful contribution to the debate.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.83).

On Monday, 23 April, the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform held a very successful high-level round table on security-sector reform and sustaining peace, which was initiated by both co-Chairs of the Group of Friends, South Africa and Slovakia. The President of the General Assembly gave an insightful opening address on the relevance of security-sector reform in the realm of sustaining peace, and I would like to thank him for his participation and strong support on this relevant issue.

Security-sector reform plays a significant role in contributing to sustainable peace and peacebuilding. It is necessary for enabling an environment for the promotion and protection of human rights and the implementation of the rule of law. Therefore, it is difficult to imagine lasting and sustainable peace without addressing security-sector reform especially given that the process is not restricted exclusively to building State institutions but is an inclusive process that has a degree of trust from citizens.

South Africa shares the vision of Secretary-General Guterres of placing emphasis on a culture of prevention, which in our view requires Member States to have sufficient capacity to avoid relapses into conflict and the international community to contribute positively to the stability, economic growth and development of countries emerging from conflict.

Furthermore, the resurgence of conflicts and the growing scale of asymmetrical threats to peace and security have created a challenge to the sustainable modalities available to partners in the sphere of peacebuiding in terms of what works and what does not. Countries that are still locked in conflicts miss an important opportunity to advance in areas of climate change mitigation ecosystem and environmental preservation, reversal of food insecurity and other threats that will be triggered by sustainable development challenges, conflict over scarce resources and grazing land and drought.

We welcome the Secretary-General's objective of forging a common vision and systems and capacities across the United Nations to consistently and effectively support Member States in their attempt to sustain peace and build resilience. Only a United Nations system that draws on all its multifaceted aspects in a synergized and efficient manner is capable of truly delivering on an agenda of sustaining peace. All organs and bodies of the United Nations must, first and foremost, work towards fulfilling the Organization's central mandate of maintaining international peace and security. That, we believe, is the foundation of any socioeconomic development.

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, highlights the inclusion of women in peace processes and post-conflict and institution-building processes, which is part of the gender-mainstreaming agenda. That aspect is also premised on the idea of building inclusive societies that draw on the strengths of all their members and leave no one marginalized or without a voice. It is a principle that South Africa has drawn on since it overcame a system of institutionalized exclusion and oppression.

My delegation is also supportive of adequate, predictable and sustainable funding for the Peacebuilding Fund and is satisfied with the various options the Secretary-General has presented on financing. Those should be complemented by a feedback mechanism structured more like a checklist of accomplishments and deliverables than an accumulation of expenses. Peacebuilding should be engineered as a supporting mechanism to restore institutional capacity to maintain the rule of law and to curb violence, and the restoration of justice, socioeconomic development, community and national reconciliation and governance structures should be prioritized.

The United Nations must draw on the efforts of regional bodies such as the African Union. The United Nations Strategic Partnership with Africa; the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, signed in 2017; and a subsequent memorandum of understanding signed between the Commission of the African Union and the Peacebuilding Support Office present an opportunity for us to work towards reaching the African Union goal of silencing the guns by 2020 and the attainment of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Those are important tools at our disposal to measure our accomplishments and deliverables in the area of peacebuilding.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): The discussion on the work of the United Nations on peacebuilding and sustaining peace goes to the very core of the purpose of the Organization. We welcome the Secretary-General's leadership in this regard.

The recognition that efforts to sustain peace are necessary not only once conflict has broken out but also long before is essential to our conversation today. Focusing on prevention is vital to building and sustaining peace and to avoiding relapse into violence. Moreover, the mutually reinforcing nature of peace, justice, human rights and development should be at the heart of our discourse in order to fully reflect the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the ambition contained therein.

The challenges facing societies affected by conflict are complex. Simplistic approaches that prioritize peace over justice or vice versa often fall short.

We support a more comprehensive approach to building and sustaining peace, one that spans the entire conflict cycle and reflects the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda in its entirety. In that regard, sustaining peace and seeking justice should be considered together, as they are interdependent. Goal 16, in particular, supports the need for greater reconciliation. There can be no lasting peace if the targets reflected in SDG 16 are not met. Universal access to justice and accountable institutions are critical in that respect.

Criminal justice is a central element of this discussion. Ensuring justice works not only to consolidate peace but also to prevent cycles of conflict and to support reconciliation. The International Criminal Court was created precisely to provide criminal accountability where national judiciaries fail to do so.

But the goal of the founders of the Court was not to have as many criminal proceedings before it as possible; quite the opposite. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court is based on the philosophy of complementarity and on the primacy of national judiciaries, and therefore it offers a powerful incentive both for States to strengthen their national capacities and for the international community to help them achieve that goal. Joining the Rome Statute can therefore play an essential role in strengthening the rule of law and its institutions, as set out in Goal 16.

For United Nations peacebuilding and sustaining peace architecture to be effective, the Security Council needs to play its role effectively, including ending and preventing conflicts and atrocity crimes. The Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group code of conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes is a strong expression of the determination of the United Nations membership to ensure effective Council action in that regard. We would like to thank Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for recently joining that initiative, which is now supported by 116 States. At the same time, there is also a growing sense of obligation in the General Assembly if the Security Council fails to prevent or end mass atrocities in a timely and decisive manner.

Mr. Shingiro (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the President for convening this important high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, in accordance with resolution 70/262.

In view of the short time available to us, I will focus solely on four areas of communication, namely, coherence, financing, prevention and the role of women and young people in the process of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

First is strengthening policy and operational coherence. Past experience has already shown that the resurgence of conflicts requires that international actors must strengthen the coherence of their policies and interventions for peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

My delegation wishes to stress the importance of the regional dimension in all efforts to strengthen coherence in the process of building and sustaining peace. There is no doubt that the most decisive support is generally that which other Member States in the region can provide, often because of their geographical, cultural and historical proximity. Regional actors must be consulted and considered in order to significantly reduce the growing deficit between regional positions and those of actors outside the region. That is in line with the African Union's principle of subsidiarity, which requires that when a subregion is seized of a situation in a country of that subregion, the latter takes precedence over actors outside the region in managing the situation, so as to avoid parallel mechanisms that are likely to undermine the efforts of the subregion.

In the same vein, we must enhance coherence in accordance with the principle of national ownership, which is the very cornerstone of the Peacebuilding Commission. As a process, building sustainable peace is not the responsibility of outside actors. Even in the most disastrous situations, external interventions must be based on what the affected populations know, particularly in the identification of priorities and strategies for sustaining peace.

Secondly, with regard to financing peacebuilding, my delegation recognizes that peacebuilding activities need adequate, predictable and sustainable funding in the face of challenges such as the fragmentation of the system and the lack of resources specifically earmarked for conflict-risk management, including in times of transition. In that regard, my delegation strongly believes that statutory contributions would significantly improve the viability of financing peacebuilding efforts.

Thirdly, with regard to prevention, my delegation believes that the preventive approach should be considered on a case-by-case basis and should avoid the use of clichés, since no two situations are alike. And in both cases, prevention must take place at all levels of the peace trajectory — local, national, regional, continental and global.

As everyone knows, prevention has several advantages. Not only does it save human lives, it also obviates the need for the huge budgets traditionally allocated to peacekeeping operations and humanitarian response plans. Prevention also means developing early-warning mechanisms before conflicts emerge. In our opinion, the development of such mechanisms must also take into account the specifics of each situation. The criteria for sounding the alarm must be clear, well defined and acceptable to all. Premature early warning should be avoided as much as possible as it could lead to unintended results. However, situations on the brink of war should not be neglected. We need a middle road, a case-by-case basis that conciliates the two situations.

We are also convinced that conflict prevention will not be effective without seriously tackling the root causes of conflict. Heading the list is the fight against poverty and social exclusion. It is here that the financing and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and regional agendas becomes crucial. The year 2030 is not far away; it is tomorrow. And on that landmark date, the world will judge us by only one criterion: whether or not we have honoured the commitments made three years ago in the framework of the 2030 Agenda.

Moreover, on the pillar of prevention, it is worth highlighting the importance of underground diplomacy. More discreet, skilful and nuanced policies, aimed in particular at building trust between groups and political leaders, must be cultivated through dialogue and safe and open channels of communication combining both invisible and visible diplomacy.

Fourth is the role of women and youth in peacebuilding efforts. My delegation firmly believes that peace is not a matter for only the political elite and that it cannot be achieved without the significant contribution of those two sectors of the population, to which Burundi attaches great importance. Establishing programmes and partnerships that give an undisputed place to women and youth is therefore a cornerstone of efforts to lay the basis for lasting peace. Peace cannot be imposed from above or from outside but must be woven into the fabric of society from the ground. An enlightened and inclusive political will to make women and young people into true agents of peace and development as an alternative to violence is essential.

My delegation believes that sustaining peace should not be understood as a single operation. It is a multisectoral, internal and continuous process. Contexts change as a result of both internal fluctuations and external shocks, and that requires the related adjustment of the norms and institutions that govern society. Similarly, the concept of sustaining peace should put more emphasis on assessing and strengthening what already works, not only on what is lacking or needs to be addressed. I conclude with those words.

Mr. Sumah (Sierra Leone): I want to thank the President for organizing this high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

At the outset, I would like to align my statement with those made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.83) and by the representative of Switzerland on behalf of the Human Rights and Conflict Prevention Caucus (see A/72/PV.84).

Sierra Leone supports the President's vision of a new approach to peace. The world has indeed changed significantly over the past two decades. We are no longer only dealing with traditional threats but also face new and emerging non-traditional ones, including terrorism, growing internal violence, transnational organized crime, the negative aspects of technological advancement and climate change. Those new and emerging non-traditional threats are becoming seemingly insurmountable challenges.

The sustaining peace resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), adopted in April 2016 by the General Assembly and the Security Council, respectively, have given the United Nations and its Member States a strong foundation to cooperatively surmount such challenges. We welcome the renewed commitment of the United Nations to conflict prevention as embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, we acknowledge the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707). The report provides us with practical analysis and concrete recommendations, including proposals for financing peacebuilding and sustaining peace activities from assessed contributions, as well as voluntary contributions and other innovative financing models. Sierra Leone fully supports the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report.

The joint study by the United Nations and the World Bank *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* notes that conflict can kill any chance for progress in many areas — from development and poverty reduction to health and education. The study also pointed out that, even with cautious estimates, more investment in conflict prevention could save the international community a huge expenditure, to the amount of $1.5 billion per year. The benefits would be even more significant at the national level, since prevention could save countries over $33 billion in losses. It is therefore important to invest in sustaining peace, as it is crucial to the realization of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, and to create the requisite environment for the smooth implementation of the SDGs and ensuring that no one is left behind.

As representatives are aware, Sierra Leone has achieved a milestone in strengthening peace and democracy through another peaceful transition from one sitting Government to another. That was the result of the conduct of free, fair and peaceful elections this year. The peaceful transfer of power in a situation where the opposition won the presidential election is a testament to the resilience of our democratic institutions.

That did not happen overnight. It is a clear manifestation of the heavy investment that successive Governments and the international community have made in peacebuilding and sustaining peace by building democratic institutions of good governance. The support of the international community, donor partners and especially the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel has been crucial. The contribution of interreligious organizations, women's and youth groups and civil society to the maintenance of peace before, during and after the elections cannot be overemphasized. They rose to the challenge of timely mediation when there were tensions and appealed for peace and non-violence, using the available media platforms.

That brings me to my next point, which is that partnerships are critical to sustaining peace. In the statement of the President at the regional dialogue on sustaining peace, held in Qatar in January this year, he stated:

> "If we want new and stronger partnerships, we need to start at home — within the United Nations system. In the past, United Nations departments, and the people in them, worked on their agendas. Social development meant only social development. Humanitarian work meant only humanitarian work. So, over the years, strong silos have formed. Now we have to tear them down because development and human rights cannot take hold if war is raging around them. Similarly, peace is more likely to stick if human rights are respected and development is inclusive."

I could not agree more.

In addition, in the pursuit of meaningful partnerships, I am proud to state that Sierra Leone is part of three initiatives that are passionate about realizing peaceful, just and inclusive societies. They are the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, the Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies and the SDG 16+ Forum.

The Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies is a group of Member States, international organizations, global partnerships and other partners. The group is convened by the Governments of Brazil, Switzerland and Sierra Leone and is supported by the Center on International Cooperation. The Pathfinders have developed the road map for peaceful, just and inclusive societies, which is also available in French and Spanish. The road map, which covers all the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development targets for peaceful, just and inclusive societies — SDG 16+ — was launched at a side event during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

For the first time, the road map provides a shared vision of how SDG 16+ can be delivered. It is an ambitious but practical document that will act as a docking station to bring many different partners and initiatives together. The road map marks the beginning of a collective journey, with a focus on the high-level political forum on sustainable development to be held in 2019 under the theme "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality". The Pathfinders group is open to all Member States, as Governments and other partners make commitments to leading on the implementation of SDG 16+.

The Global Alliance has created partnerships between the United Nations and other actors. These include the private sector, civil society and academia. These institutions are aware of the links between inclusive growth, strong institutions and sustaining peace. What is required is strong partnerships in strengthening these links. That is how we can sustain peace.

Let me conclude by saying that this high-level meeting, which has brought together experiences and lessons learned in sustaining peace from across the world, gives us the opportunity to commit, at the highest level, to making conflict prevention the norm and not the exception.

Mr. Escalante Hasbún (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened this high-level meeting and for the concept note.

The maintenance of international peace and security is one of the main purposes of the United Nations, and this two-day meeting allows us to take an in-depth look at central aspects of the issue, thereby helping us to ensure that peace can be sustained in the long term. My country believes that the peacebuilding process must be a fundamental part of the work of the United Nations, linking peace and sustainable development, effectively promoting a culture that seeks a peaceful resolution to conflicts, and safeguarding full respect for human rights.

Peacebuilding is not just a transitional phase but, rather, an ongoing task, since it involves not only the cessation of armed conflict but also the building of public institutions and the development of an awareness on the part of the citizenry that will serve to support it.

Sustaining peace cannot be only the task of a Government within a given territory. Rather, all the State's energies must be involved. Similarly, within the United Nations, peacekeeping is not the work of one office alone; the peace component must be incorporated into all of the actions carried out by the Organization in the framework of the principles set out in the Charter and in the broader work of its three pillars for action.

Over the years, my delegation, as a faithful member of the Peacebuilding Commission, has supported the broadening of the concept of sustaining peace in both its regional dimension and over time. We therefore welcome the efforts made, from a holistic perspective linked to sustainable development, to move prevention back into the heart of discussions at the United Nations, where it belongs.

We wish to highlight the vital role played by the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, which is currently assisting my country throughout the evolution of this concept. The role of these bodies should be strengthened and complemented by other parts of the Secretariat and the United Nations system as a whole. By adopting the twin resolutions in 2016 — resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) — we committed to deepening this transformation, and this high-level meeting is part of the process.

El Salvador, as an active participant in United Nations peacekeeping operations and as a country committed to incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the national level and on the ground, as a country committed to human rights, and as a country that 26 years ago experienced an armed conflict and its resolution with the support of the United Nations, knows first-hand what is to be understood by sustaining peace.

A true sustained peace requires the participation of women and young people on the ground and in decision-making, as set out in Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2250 (2015), respectively. My delegation also believes that if this focus is to be applied and be effective, there must also be strategic financing in the context of the work of the United Nations; we therefore welcome the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/72/707 and the discussion of the recommendations contained therein.

It is important to conduct an in-depth review of the work on peace in all its dimensions while also taking account of the fact that the United Nations, including through its country teams, is just one of the outside agents that is tasked, alongside other regional actors, with supporting Governments in building a sustained peace that is directly linked to development needs and strengths, including, of course, SDG 16, which is the cornerstone of and hinge between the two areas. It is beyond question that peace is intimately linked to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, whose main aim is the eradication of poverty. We cannot conceive, therefore, of sustainable development without peace or peace without sustainable development.

In conclusion, El Salvador will continue to support the incorporation of the concept of sustaining peace into the various bodies of the United Nations, on the basis of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General, with new inputs to be added as set out in the procedural draft resolution (A/72/L.49) that we will be adopting as a result of this high-level meeting. This must all contribute to the process of analysis on the road to 2020, without neglecting the practical links that our discussions have in terms of implementation on the ground with the process of repositioning the United Nations development system and the proposed reform of the peace and security pillar, which we hope to receive soon.

Compartmentalizing reality is a problem that has plagued the United Nations throughout its history and that we can no longer countenance at a time when we are considering the concept of sustained peace in its full and just dimensions.

Mr. Hawke (New Zealand): Speakers before me have described this agenda as having the power to be transformative and to be a paradigm shift. New Zealand could not agree more, and we thank the President for having convened this meeting.

The promise of our discussions today is that of a world in which we can significantly reduce the risk of conflict. Peacebuilding and sustaining peace is the shared and mutually reinforcing responsibility of the United Nations system and of Member States.

For the United Nations, we fully support and encourage the work already under way, including the Secretary-General's focus on conflict prevention; his scaling up of the mediation capability of the United Nations; and his gender-parity efforts. We also commend his work to strengthen bodies such as the Peacebuilding Commission.

As identified by the Secretary-General, we encourage the United Nations to address the problem of fragmentation. For this to be effective, the Organization needs to undergo cultural changes as well. We as Member States have a collective obligation to put our time and energy into supporting peacebuilding rather than waiting for a crisis to erupt. This should extend to those Member States that have the privilege to serve on the Security Council.

This can involve small things, such as thinking more broadly about whom the Council should be engaging with and how consultations can be more effective, to bigger things such as situational awareness for all Council members and what should be going into Council resolutions.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to cite the wider reforms proposed by the Secretary-General. These reforms directly acknowledge that an integrated approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace is a task that extends well beyond the mandate and responsibility of any one body or institution. New Zealand, along with many others, is strongly supportive of these proposals. All three reform streams are vital for a contemporary United Nations. Taken together, these changes will ensure that the United Nations truly lives the sustaining peace agenda.

The themes I have covered are not new, but our willingness to prioritize the long-term sustainability of peacebuilding efforts will be judged by their results.

Mr. Mero (United Republic of Tanzania): My delegation commends the President for having convened this very important high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. It reminds us that the report of the Secretary-General on the issue (A/72/707) focuses on how he and his team plan to implement the peacebuilding and sustaining peace agenda, which aims to put prevention at the heart of the United Nations work. The report is also based on the twin resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council, respectively, in April 2016. The ideas put forward in the resolutions demonstrate that preventing, ending and transforming violent conflict require a deliberate alignment of development, humanitarian, diplomatic and security interventions.

It is important to note that in order to reduce the likelihood of conflicts and of post-conflict countries relapsing into violence, it is essential to solve holistically the issues of inequality, unemployment, poverty, human rights abuses, climate change, governance, weak law enforcement and illicit national and transnational crime, as well as that of inequitable allocation of resources.

My delegation believes that if we are truly going to have a United Nations system that is better oriented towards prevention, human rights and sustainable development, it will have to trust and invest more in people, including partner Governments, local peacebuilders and its own staff. The United Nations system and its agencies have the capabilities and the commitment. However, they are separated by their silos. The job of the United Nations leadership is to support them in realizing their shared potential and to align their work around what they all agree is most important in ending and in preventing conflicts.

The report entitled "Challenge of sustaining peace" proposed a new funding mechanism for United Nations peacebuilding, by which the Peacebuilding Fund could be provided with core funding of 1 per cent of the value of the total United Nations budget for peace operations. The twin resolutions only took note of that recommendation, while encouraging Member States to continue to make voluntary contributions to the Fund. In that regard, the United Nations system needs to present a comprehensive analysis of the current funding of peacebuilding and sustaining peace in order to achieve a permanent solution.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and sustaining peace have far-reaching implications for peace, security and collective well-being in today's complex and interconnected world. Those two comprehensive and integrative frameworks should guide the work of the United Nations in the years ahead. Sustained, proactive leadership is needed to transform the collective energy behind those agendas into new avenues for achieving their aspirations and ambitious but achievable goals.

The non-inclusion of women and youth in peace processes means that the agreements on ensuing peace do not recognize the needs of the population as a whole. Keeping in mind that some peace agreements fall apart after a few years of existence, the international community needs to explore new ways to create sustainable peace. Including women and youth in formal peace processes would be an important step towards achieving that.

In conclusion, I wish to affirm that the United Republic of Tanzania will continue to take the peacebuilding and sustaining peace agenda seriously in view of the fact that, along with other countries, it contributes troops to several United Nations peacekeeping missions. Striving for peace should be a collective endeavour that involves Governments, international organizations, regional blocs, non-State actors, religious groups, civil societies and individuals.

Mr. Al-Mouallimi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country is committed to the fundamental principles of international relations, in particular building and maintaining peace. In that regard, my country underscores that the basic foundation for building and maintaining peace is established by achieving justice. Without justice there can be no peace, even in the absence of violence for periods of time.

The first example of peace that fails to be achieved owing to lack of justice is the Palestinian question. The Palestinian people have suffered under the yoke of occupation for decades without a glimmer of hope that one day they would be able to obtain their legitimate rights to establish their own independent State along the borders of 4 June 1967, with Jerusalem as its capital.

My country has sought to settle conflicts peacefully. To that end, it has put forward a number of initiatives. Regarding the Palestinian question, my country put forward the Arab Peace Initiative, which was adopted by the Arab States at their summit held in Beirut in 2002.

On the issue of Yemen, my country has led the peacekeeping operation as part of the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative, which allowed for a peaceful transfer of power before the Houthi rebels took control, supported by Iran.

In Syria, my country sought to unite the opposition and to prepare the ground for serious negotiations with the Syrian Government in order to implement the first Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex) and Security Council resolution 2254 (2015).

In Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, Iraq and elsewhere, my country has been a key supporter of peace and reconciliation between brotherly peoples. We have sought to bring together the positions of various parties. We have worked to promote a culture of dialogue, mutual understanding and tolerance at both the national and the international levels. To that end, my country has established a number of national and international centres, such as the King Abdulaziz Centre for National Dialogue, the Global Centre for Combating Extremist Ideology, the King Abdullah Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, and others.

We reaffirm that the United Nations must play a more effective role in peacebuilding and in establishing peace foundations, by strengthening sustainable development, particularly in developing countries, and by working closely with regional and subregional organizations to strengthen their capacities to bring about peace and prevent conflicts. That can be achieved by creating specialized forums to address specific issues before they deteriorate further. They must also seek to strengthen mediation and reconciliation while working proactively to maintain respect for the national sovereignty of Member States.

We hope that at this high-level meeting, the General Assembly will adopt a programme of work that includes all such elements and focuses on establishing justice and development, since those are the two key foundations of international peace and security.

Mr. Inguanez (Malta): Malta aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday on behalf of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83). We would like to add a few elements in our national capacity.

Despite the fact that most countries enjoy peace and prosperity, we cannot ignore the sobering reality that a number of regions are still plagued by conflict. We remain deeply worried about the ongoing violence in our immediate neighbourhood and beyond, and we are gravely concerned about the implications those events can have for regional and international peace and security. The devastating effects that those conflicts have on the civilian population cannot be ignored. On the contrary, they are a stark reminder of our collective responsibility as members of the international community to promote and to sustain international peace.

Malta has always sought to contribute to efforts aimed at strengthening the current peace architecture and to foster actions conducive to the maintenance of peace. In that regard, we greatly appreciate the work done by the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly and will continue to fully support their efforts.

Malta strongly believes in the importance of dealing with root causes in order to build resilient societies and to prevent violent conflict. It is crucial that we identify challenges before they turn into greater problems and work towards mitigating their negative effects before they spiral out of control. Governments should work towards increasing and creating new employment opportunities, providing the right conditions for their citizens to succeed and to achieve their ambitions and aspirations. In that context, the role of civil society, women and youth is of fundamental importance. Particular emphasis also needs to be placed on the rule of law, accountability, access to justice and human rights.

For more than 70 years, the United Nations has contributed greatly to the maintenance of international peace and security. As the nature of conflict continues to evolve and becomes more complex and multifaceted, the United Nations also needs to evolve and to adapt in order to remain effective and responsive. We strongly believe that with the input and commitment of all Member States, the reform process will bring about the necessary changes to make sure that the United Nations retains its role as the most important player in the international arena.

Ms. Plepytė (Lithuania): Lithuania aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday on behalf of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83) and would like to add some remarks in its national capacity.

Today, numerous armed conflicts and instability in the world make us return to the main purposes of the United Nations: to maintain peace and security throughout the world. However, peaceful and sustainable coexistence among countries and societies requires collective efforts and determination, as well as national commitment to a sustainable future that belongs to us all.

Peace is not only the absence of violence. There are institutions, structures, communities and attitudes that underpin it. Understanding what makes peace possible enables us to sustain it.

In the twin resolutions on peacebuilding and sustaining peace of 2016 (resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)), we asserted that sustaining peace should flow through all three pillars of the United Nations and that it must involve the entire United Nations system. In that context, we particularly welcome and fully support the Secretary-General's steps and vision regarding the three United Nations reform tracks. Those reforms are necessary to make the United Nations truly focused and capable of sustaining peace. At the same time, we welcome the recent report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707) and the recommendations and options that it contains. We must work together to advance those recommendations and continue to implement them.

Let me now touch on two elements that are of particular importance to my delegation: inclusivity and adequate resourcing for sustaining peace activities.

Inclusive, transparent and effective decision-making and respect for the rule of law are critical to sustaining peace. When peacebuilding efforts are based on inclusive societal consultations, where credible mechanisms for effective and broad public participation exist and no group or segment of the society is excluded, that generates legitimacy and trust in the State and its institutions. Conversely, the absence of such inclusivity threatens peace and reconciliation processes and the stability of the State itself.

In particular, women, youth and civil society can and must play an active role in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and the peacebuilding efforts that follow. We have an increasing amount of evidence that the participation of women means greater peace and stability. However, at the same time and despite that knowledge, investment in women, peace and security, as well as in women and sustaining peace, remains woefully low.

It is our view that sustaining peace has major linkages with the women and peace and security agenda. Both agendas have a key commitment to the principle of prevention. Yet we also have to recognize that prevention is the least developed and most underresourced aspect of both the women and peace and security agenda and the sustaining peace agenda. There is a clear need to address that key gap for a long-lasting peace. For that, we need to discuss ways to ensure better financing for United Nations prevention activities, whether as part of the women and peace and security agenda or that of sustaining peace.

That brings me to my second point, which is that the effectiveness of the United Nations system in sustaining peace is contingent on appropriate resourcing. Examples from the field indicate that well-designed and well-managed pooled funds can improve the efficiency of the work of the United Nations in sustaining peace. The United Nations system needs smarter money, not necessarily more money. Innovative ways of financing and partnerships with the private sector should be at the forefront of our discussion on how to improve funding for United Nations activities in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. In that context, we look forward to the interim report of the Secretary-General further elaborating on his recommendations and options, including those on financing for United Nations peacebuilding activities. We remain hopeful that the report will steer the needed discussion and will lead to some important decisions.

Let me conclude by saying that it is in our common interest to further reinforce the sustaining peace efforts by utilizing the momentum of the United Nations reform, committing to the adequate resourcing and capacity-building of the United Nations system and encouraging Member States to fully engage and work towards a sustainable peace. Lithuania remains ready to do its part.

Mr. Kickert (Austria): The United Nations is undergoing a paradigm shift in how it addresses conflict. That is very necessary, as traditional approaches have too often failed us. We now understand that efforts to sustain peace are indispensable not only once a conflict has broken out but also long before, through the prevention of conflict and by addressing its root causes.

Against that background, Austria welcomes the vision of the Secretary-General and his efforts towards sustaining peace, which are fully reflected in his recent report (A/72/707), and his proposals for the reform of the Organization. It is now for us, the Member States, to lend him our support for his ambitious efforts. The adoption of draft resolution A/72/L.49 will be testimony to that support. In that regard, let me underline three key points.

First, the deepened engagement of the United Nations for conflict prevention is in fact an offer to Member States to avail themselves of international support not only before potential outbreaks of conflict but also in phases of transition after conflict. In that respect, we salute the proposals of the Secretary-General to form a new generation of United Nations country teams, centred around a strategic United Nations Development Assistance Framework led by empowered Resident Coordinators.

Secondly, as the Secretary-General himself recently noted:

> "An emphasis on human rights lies at the heart of conflict prevention, which must be our highest priority."

We cannot make any progress without helping countries to build their capacity to protect their own population. We also cannot look the other way anymore in the case of mass atrocities. The United Nations and its leadership must speak truth to power.

Thirdly, women must be at the core of our efforts towards sustaining peace. We welcome the Secretary-General's system-wide strategy on gender parity to address the lack of parity at all levels. We must also not tire in our efforts to fully implement the women and peace and security agenda as a core element in achieving sustained peace.

Through the collaborative approach of our development agency, line ministries and other partners, Austria currently supports a number of peacebuilding initiatives. Allow me to highlight three pertinent initiatives with regional governmental and non-governmental organizations.

First, Austria is currently supporting strengthening the Conflict Prevention Framework of the Economic Community of West African States in a multi-year collaboration with the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding. With that project, we aim to contribute to an integrated and decentralized early-warning and response system at the community, national and regional levels in western Africa.

Secondly, the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution cooperates with the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre to train 50 West African humanitarian assistance professionals in a two-year project to increase their response capacity.

Thirdly, Austria is working with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to support its Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism in the Horn of Africa. That project will support IGAD's collaboration with national Governments in the subregion to counter transnational security threats and enhance the skills of IGAD and national Governments in the areas of preventive diplomacy and mediation. It also provides for capacity-building and core staffing for IGAD's Peace and Security Division.

Let me conclude by thanking the President for organizing this high-level meeting. We sincerely hope that it contributes to concrete change on the ground, as that is why we are here. People everywhere have high expectations of the United Nations. It is our shared responsibility not to disappoint them.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, for having convened this very important high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace and for his strong commitment and dedication to the issue. We are also grateful to the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his comprehensive report on the topic (A/72/707). I join previous speakers in congratulating the Permanent Representatives of Bangladesh and Lithuania for their successful steering of the consultations on draft resolution A/72/L.49, which will be adopted later today as an important outcome of the high-level meeting.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered earlier in the meeting by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.83). We would like to make some additional remarks in our national capacity.

The unlawful use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of States, the increased brutality of armed conflicts, growing terrorist and separatist threats and the highest-ever level of forced displacement, intolerance and discrimination on ethnic and religious grounds continue to represent the most serious challenges to peace, security and sustainable development.

In their twin resolutions on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, 70/262 and 2282 (2016), respectively, the General Assembly and the Security Council particularly stressed the need for joint work by Member States to sustain peace at all stages of conflict and in all its dimensions.

Azerbaijan fully supports the Secretary-General's determination to genuinely contribute to preventing wars and sustaining peace, as well as his efforts to conduct the reform process with a view to responding early and effectively to conflicts and crises and assisting Member States in their efforts to sustain peace and build resilient and prosperous societies.

First and foremost, all States must strictly comply with their international obligations, particularly those relating to respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the inviolability of their internationally recognized borders. Those fundamental principles are constituents of the common, rule-based international order. They are universally binding and apply to all situations and conflicts, whatever their distinct root causes and nature.

Peace and good-neighbourly relations, based on full respect for the aforementioned principles, are necessary fundamental prerequisites for economic cooperation. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Heads of State and Government stated in particular that there could be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.

The concept of conflict prevention, in its inter-State dimension, is inextricably linked to the principle of the peaceful settlement of international disputes enshrined in Article 2, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United

Nations. The primary objective of that principle is to commit States to refraining in their international relations from the threat or use of force, except in cases of self-defence and activities authorized by the Security Council, and resolving their disputes peacefully and in conformity with international law.

It is important to underline that the principle of the peaceful settlement of international disputes — or, to a certain extent, the concept of prevention as its non-legal equivalent — cannot be misused for covering up aggression or interpreted as implying the continuation and maintenance of situations created through violations of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

For the purpose of preventing the escalation of conflicts, more energy and political will should be invested in the implementation of resolutions adopted by the principal organs of the United Nations. It is unacceptable and intolerable that armed aggression against sovereign States and the resulting military occupation of their territories continue despite Security Council resolutions. We concur with the Secretary-General that political will to sustain peace remains invaluable.

The international human rights framework also provides a critical foundation for sustaining peace, in particular in the context of addressing the effects of conflict on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of those suffering, especially forcibly displaced persons, including through the use of the existing mechanisms, such as special procedures, treaty bodies and the Universal Periodic Review.

Azerbaijan's consistent position with regard to the topic under consideration stems from its practical experience of facing continued armed aggression, foreign military occupation and ethnic cleansing and from its keen interest in contributing to the achievement of lasting peace and sustainable development in our region and worldwide.

Ms. Bird (Australia): Sustaining peace is a policy agenda with the potential to have a transformative impact on the United Nations effectiveness. Properly implemented, it will make the United Nations more fit for purpose in the modern world and enhance implementation of the United Nations founding principles in this day and age.

Sustaining peace is a core, organizing principle for the whole United Nations across its three pillars. It provides a home for the vision of United Nations reform that will only become more essential as individual United Nations reform tracks go forward.

Australia was proud to co-facilitate negotiations on the landmark sustaining peace resolutions adopted in 2016 (resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)). We welcome this high-level meeting, as well as the recent Secretary-General's report on the issue (A/72/707), both of which were requested in those original resolutions. We also welcome the imminent adoption of the new draft resolution (A/72/L.49). All of those developments give us what we need to continue successfully implementing this agenda.

We are encouraged by the energy and commitment of Member States, the United Nations leadership and the United Nations system to taking action to date. Continued implementation is essential. For Member States, the resolutions emphasize the primary responsibility of national Governments and authorities for sustaining peace. Continued efforts by Member States to advance inclusive peacebuilding processes are vital.

When it comes to the United Nations system, let there be no confusion. Sustaining peace requires action from the entire United Nations system, not just the traditional peacebuilding areas. Member States have expressed their clear expectation that the whole United Nations system will advance this agenda energetically and without delay. Further consideration by Member States of a few outstanding issues must not delay progress in other areas.

We must prioritize organizational change. It will be crucial to embed coherent working methods throughout the United Nations system, to deepen and broaden partnerships outside the United Nations system, to ensure that reforms make a practical difference in the field and to get better at identifying and delivering effective action on prevention. Ensuring that the key role of women is recognized and used to advance sustaining peace will be vital. Financing, including from the private sector and innovative sources, will be key.

With the new sustaining peace resolution we will have a further window to continue implementing this agenda. We need to use that time well, moving further beyond the slogans and building a United Nations that is as effective as possible at sustaining peace in practice.

Mr. Korneliou (Cyprus): At the outset, let me congratulate the President for organizing this important and timely high-level event. We hope that this meeting will prove to be instrumental in garnering support for the new United Nations approach on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Cyprus aligns itself with the statement of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83) and would like to add the following in its national capacity.

The sustaining peace agenda should be part of a wider response to the urgent need to strengthen the coherence of the United Nations system, addressing the root causes of conflicts and new threats and challenges to international peace and security, such as terrorism and extremism. Cyprus supports the efforts of the Secretary-General and the renewed focus on the need for a United Nations system that can better serve its Member States in their efforts to prevent armed conflicts and sustain peace.

The concept of sustaining peace represents a shift in current practice, as it espouses a system-wide approach that incorporates peacebuilding and peacekeeping alongside sustainable development, human rights and humanitarian activities. Sustaining peace is essentially the responsibility of Member States, and the process must be owned and led by the Governments and the peoples of conflict-affected countries with the support of the international community. The United Nations system should support Member States within the framework defined by the Charter of the United Nations, and must be given the operational, financial and political resources to deliver that support effectively.

From a national perspective, the Cyprus question is certainly pertinent in that context. The Cyprus question remains an issue of international peace and security of the United Nations, owing to the enduring foreign occupation and forceful de facto division of my country, in gross violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. In that regard, as a country that has been sheltered by and has relied on United Nations peacekeeping, we are grateful for and highly value the role of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). As long as the situation on the ground remains unchanged and until a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus question is reached, UNFICYP's continued presence in its current mandate remains indispensable.

Let me reiterate that we remain firmly committed to the solution of the Cyprus problem, as enshrined in relevant resolutions, as the only way forward. The United Nations remains the only forum through which a comprehensive settlement can be achieved and should therefore be at the forefront of efforts to reunite Cyprus. A just and lasting settlement would benefit the people of Cyprus and contribute decisively to the wider efforts to maintain a much-needed environment of peace, stability and prosperity in our region. At the same time, it is crucial that all actors embrace the importance of sustaining peace through dialogue and respect for international law.

We hope that this event will contribute to forging a strong consensus on a renewed and reformed peace and security architecture by 2020 and that the United Nations will be better equipped to help fragile and war-torn nations build a more durable and just peace. Cyprus stands ready to render its full support.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): First of all, let me thank the President for organizing this important debate.

Looking at the current, worrying international developments, it is clear that sustaining peace needs to remain an important priority of the United Nations and its Member States. In fact, the Organization was founded to sustain peace more than 70 years ago. The whole Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations is a clear definition of sustaining and building peace. Peace is built before, during and long after conflict, and that is what the Charter is about.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands therefore has put sustaining peace at the basis of its foreign policy. It is also the basic theme during its membership of the Security Council this year, in which the prevention of conflicts, peacekeeping efforts during conflict and accountability after conflict are our key priorities. All of them are connected to sustaining peace. I will highlight three points in my introduction: first, the importance of national ownership and prevention; secondly, the importance of inclusion and, thirdly, the need to strengthen partnerships, also in peacekeeping.

My first point concerns national ownership and prevention. We, the Member States, have the primary responsibility to build sustainable peace at the national level. Taking national ownership to prevent conflict and to sustain peace needs to build on the blueprint provided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To implement the Sustainable Development Goals is to address the root causes of conflict. It is about socioeconomic development and access to justice. It is about addressing the effects of climate change — one of the biggest threats to humankind of our time. It is about all the goals that make our societies peaceful, just and inclusive. It is about addressing the root causes of conflict as the best way to prevent conflict.

Secondly, we must strengthen inclusive approaches. As a recent joint United Nations-World Bank study, entitled *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, shows us, political, social and economic exclusion and the lack of inclusive and accountable justice and security institutions are key factors in igniting and perpetuating conflict.

Fundamental human rights, the rule of law and human dignity are the foundation for freedom, justice and peace. That includes the freedom of religion or belief, be it for Christian minorities in the Middle East, Muslim minorities in Asia and Africa or any other religious minorities anywhere in the world. We need to address the needs and grievances of marginalized groups and ensure an active participation of all of society's components, including women, youth and those whose sexual orientation or gender identity does not conform to societal or cultural norms. That is the most effective way to make sure that no one is left behind.

My third point is that we need to break down the silos and strengthen partnerships. As the Secretary-General just mentioned in the Security Council, we need to improve peacekeeping operations, which are active during conflicts. For that, we need an enhanced partnership for peacekeeping between the United Nations and all its Member States. The report of the Secretary-General (A/72/707) mentions successful examples like the Global Focal Point programme. It demonstrates how the United Nations can achieve coherence and overcome fragmentation. We should seek to apply those examples in various contexts. Cross-pillar models of United Nations joint assessments, planning, programming and fundraising need to be institutionalized and should become standard practice.

A strengthened Peacebuilding Commission and a well-resourced Peacebuilding Fund are crucial tools. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is proud to be a top donor to the Peacebuilding Fund, and we should make sure that the wider United Nations development system, especially the United Nations Development Programme, is better connected to peacekeeping efforts.

That is just the beginning. The United Nations cannot do that alone. It needs to strengthen its partnerships with other multilateral, regional and local organizations, including civil society and the private sector. In particular, the partnership with the World Bank needs to be further operationalized to create synergy in the field.

We welcome the decision of the General Assembly to further discuss the options and recommendations for sustaining peace. We will continue our efforts in the Security Council, building on our partnership with Italy, with which we share a seat in the Council in 2017 and 2018. We will continue in that joint seat to promote the issue of building and sustaining peace in the Security Council. Real political will and the mobilization of resources will be critical to operationalize a more integrated agenda. Only by working more closely together can we strengthen prevention and improve peacekeeping operations and post-conflict peacebuilding. Only working together can we build and sustain peace. That is our common challenge.

Mr. Ntwaagae (Botswana): In the past 72 years, United Nations peacekeeping has been instrumental in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. In that regard, we have been only active, rather than proactive, in that call, especially in the area of sustaining peace.

Today the need for a global commitment to multilateral solutions to conflicts and to collaborative security is more urgent than ever before, especially in the area of conflict prevention, peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The conflicts in Syria, Yemen, Mali, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and the current situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to mention but a few, are the very reasons why, more than ever, the issue of sustaining peace must be addressed by the Organization and its membership.

Conflict prevention and sustaining peace are, first and foremost, the responsibility of every Member State, a position that Botswana has consistently espoused. When Member States fail to protect their own people, then it is the collective responsibility of this body, as per the purposes and principles of the Charter of the

United Nations, to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and prevent the outbreak, continuation or recurrence of conflict. Prevention and sustaining peace are in everyone's interest. They should not be seen as a threat to sovereignty.

However, a balance should be forged and trust obtained among the Member States regarding how to bring about and sustain peace. The effectiveness of measures such as early warning and early action depends on trust among Member States. Sustaining peace is first and foremost,a process that requires the political will of the entire membership. It needs to be adequately resourced and inclusive.

The signs are always there. Conflict stems from exclusion, discrimination, marginalization, human rights violations, political, economic and social inequalities and the political choice to resort to violence rather than dialogue. Prevention requires addressing the root causes of conflict and instability before they get out of control. It calls for inclusive, nationally led processes that build strong institutions and that are supported by citizens, including women and youth.

The sustaining peace agenda, together with the Sustainable Development Goals, provides the platform and the master plan for any Member State to draft its own national plan. That is the very path that my delegation took in drafting our National Vision 2036 and the National Development Plan 11, both of which are aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Agenda.

As Member States, we need to invest in inclusivity so as to make people reap the benefits of diversity rather than seeing diversity as a threat. Everyone in society must have a strong feeling of belonging to a community in order for peace to prevail.

Civil society also has an important role to play in raising the alarm when that respect is threatened or lost or with the rise of autocratic regimes cracking down on fundamental freedoms and political oppositions. The inclusion and involvement of women and youth in peacemaking processes is of great importance. Those segments of our societies play an important role in both preventive diplomacy and in peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

There is also the issue of partnerships and cooperation with regional entities, which is another important factor to be considered. We need strong partnerships. A combination of United Nations efforts with those of regional and subregional organizations is crucial for success. The United Nations cannot achieve sustainable peace alone. National and subregional stakeholders need to be equally involved, with the oversight, expertise and support of the United Nations, other regional organizations and civil-society organizations.

Let us break down the silos and divisions, as delegations before me indicated. We need to do that in order to strengthen our collaboration. We will need to work towards a future in which sustaining peace is not the task of the United Nations alone, but a joint effort of all of us and the core objective of all regional entities. The upcoming negotiations on the United Nations peace and security pillar in the Fifth Committee provide an opportunity for us to reaffirm those calls and finance the initiatives of sustaining peace. Investing in prevention is not only morally right; it is the smart, economically sound and sensible thing to do.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm my delegation's support for the adoption of draft resolution A/72/L.49. We will continue to play our part as a country by constructively contributing to the Secretary-General's reform on the peace and security pillar, and we stand ready to share lessons, experiences and best practices with the United Nations membership from an African perspective.

Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia): I would like to thank the President for convening this important high-level meeting to assess the efforts we have undertaken so far and explore the opportunities to further strengthen the United Nations work on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We would like to thank him also for the valuable work in the process leading up to the high-level meeting today, guided by the road map for sustaining peace, including by conducting interactive dialogues with all relevant stakeholders and other useful outreach activities.

While fully aligning ourselves with the statement of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83), I would like to offer some additional reflections.

The so called twin resolutions adopted simultaneously by the General Assembly and the Security Council on 27 April 2016 (resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), respectively) represent the most comprehensive United Nations resolutions on peacebuilding. They established the concept of sustaining peace and broadened our understanding of peacebuilding as simultaneously a goal and a process that covers the entire peace continuum, including all stages of the conflict cycle. They acknowledged the primacy of politics, the primary responsibility of respective national Governments for peace and security and the significance of people-centred and inclusive processes through the centrality of conflict prevention.

Slovakia attaches great importance to developing a comprehensive and integrated approach to peace and to the need to prioritize conflict prevention and embrace the concept of sustaining peace across all three pillars of the work of the United Nations.

In that respect, my delegation welcomes and supports the vision of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace as expressed in his report (A/72/707) issued in January. In that report, the Secretary-General laid out many recommendations, which deserve our close consideration and concerted action. We would like to support in particular the efforts to increase coherence across the United Nations system, enhance the capacities of the United Nations resident coordinators and revitalize the Peacebuilding Support Office. Greater predictability and sustainability of financing for peacebuilding and sustaining peace must also be addressed, and we note with appreciation that the Secretary-General's report makes a number of innovative proposals in that regard.

It should also be noted that peacebuilding encompasses a wide range of political, development, humanitarian and human rights dimensions and tools. Therefore, innovating and strengthening the capabilities of the United Nations in the area of peacebuilding and sustaining peace must be closely linked to the ongoing efforts proposed by the Secretary-General on recalibrating the United Nations development system, reforming management and restructuring the peace and security pillar.

Too often, public grievances and violence are driven by the politics of exclusion, which may result from an unrepresentative or abusive security sector or from its failure to protect citizens from security threats and human rights violations.

To enhance knowledge and understanding of the role of security sector reform in sustaining peace and to feed into the broader discussions taking place today and yesterday, the Permanent Missions of Slovakia and South Africa, as co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform, co-hosted on Monday the high-level round table on security-sector reform and sustaining peace. We are happy to say that it was a very successful event, which we hope has contributed and will contribute further to our deliberations on the issue of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Over the course of that event, we discussed in particular national ownership and leadership of security-sector reform and the importance of national policy and governance frameworks, as well as the inclusion of women and the representation of diverse sectors of society in such reform processes from the outset. We have also examined the role of partnerships and financing in the context of security-sector reform effortsand called for United Nations coordination of those complex and sensitive processes. A co-Chairs' statement of the round table with the key observations and recommendations has just been circulated today to all member States.

In conclusion, I wish to add that the benefits of investing in sustaining peace and sustainable development are clear and convincing. We spend too much money on responding to crises and conflicts and too little on preventing them in the first place. Orienting the United Nations system around those goals and changing the imbalance between conflict prevention and conflict response will be a daunting, nevertheless rewarding, challenge. Indeed, it is the only way forward to promote just, inclusive and peaceful societies, and therefore it represents our shared responsibility.

Finally, I would like to express our full support for the adoption of draft resolution A/72/L.49, on the follow-up to the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, at the end of the plenary session of this high-level meeting. The draft resolution establishes a mechanism to maintain the momentum on this important subject by enabling the Secretary-General to continue with the implementation of the peacebuilding agenda and encouraging the General Assembly to keep following the work in this area beyond this high-level meeting. Sustaining peace and prevention require from all of us sustained commitment, effort and courage — a true culture of peace materialized in tangible, bold action delivered to the people of our planet on the ground.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): First of all, let me join other delegations in commending His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčák for convening this high-level meeting. In our view, this event, together with the Secretary-General's composite emphasis, confirms the unity of purpose of our Organization when it comes to peace and security and development.

I align my statement with that made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.83).

The adoption in 2016 of the General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) led to a new paradigm shift on the issues of peace and development. The concept of sustaining peace links the peace continuum to development and human rights. Needless to say, they mutually reinforce each other to the extent that neither can be achieved without the other.

Our national experience also confirms that conflict prevention and sustaining peace will succeed only when the root causes of conflicts are addressed through an inclusive approach. While national Governments and authorities have the primary responsibility for sustaining peace, the international community, including the United Nations and development partners, has the complementary and shared responsibility of supporting the efforts of national Governments.

It is equally important to engage all stakeholders in charting a new pathway for development and sustaining peace. It fits well into the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is to leave no one behind. We welcome the Secretary-General's proposal to extend the capacity of the Peacebuilding Support Office and develop it as a hinge between the peace and security pillar and other pillars, as well as with the humanitarian community. We believe that its ability to deliver should not be compromised in any manner.

We take note of the proposed reform of the United Nations development system, with a revitalized United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which incorporates conflict-sensitivity analysis. We believe that national Governments should be fully informed of and consulted in the analysis of conflict risks so that the United Nations country teams' efforts to prevent conflict do not unwittingly spur conflict because of inadequate risk analysis resulting from a lack of proper understanding of the local context and culture.

Nepal, emerging as it is from armed conflict, mega-earthquakes and other major crises, is determined to implement its human rights-based Constitution, adopted in 2015, which is the culmination of the country's uniquely successful peace process. In that connection, the successful local, provincial and federal elections in 2017 were a landmark accomplishment, with more than 41 per cent of seats in the elected bodies at all levels being filled by women.

Nepal has entered a new era of political stability, with a focus on sustainable socioeconomic transformation. The Government is determined to make the most of this historic opportunity, but the continued understanding, support and cooperation of the international community is needed more than ever.

Nepal has been a consistent and reliable partner in United Nations peacekeeping operations, even at the height of its own internal conflict. With its own experience of a post-conflict peace process in its multicultural, multireligious, multi-ethnic and multilingual context, Nepal believes in the power of synergies between peace and development at both the global and national levels.

We should not make the mistake of seeing peacebuilding and sustainable development through different lenses. There must be strong and sustained political will to reinforce sustaining peace initiatives through sincere and sustainable development initiatives.

Mr. Sisilo (Solomon Islands): Solomon Islands also has something to share on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, thanks to our own experience of the atrocities of armed conflict following a lapse in security in the late 1990s. It was the result of a complex set of interrelated issues that included a fast-growing population, slow economic growth and weak State institutions, to name some. But thanks to the deployment of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI), we were able to restore peace. RAMSI, a regional intervention, will be remembered as a positive example of friends coming together in support of a neighbour experiencing a crisis of immense proportions.

While RAMSI has been very successful, the process of post-conflict rebuilding must continue. Like other countries in post-conflict situations, Solomon Islands will continue to face many challenges, all the more so now that we are on the verge of graduating out of the least developed countries category. But thankfully, over the past year the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) has widened its coverage with a new building plan that includes my country. We are therefore very grateful for the support of the PBC and look forward to working closely with all key stakeholders to show unity of effort across the United Nations system. This approach must be based on sound political and conflict analysis that recognizes the uniqueness of each national and regional context in which United Nations system entities are present.

Based on our experience, the contribution of young people to sustaining peace must also be recognized and supported with targeted funding. Young people are very much the present and the future, and their potential for building and sustaining peace must be harnessed. We must also commit to increasing financing for gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment in conflict-affected situations. Adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding initiatives is therefore critical. One way of securing such financing is to set aside some of our assessed contributions for peacebuilding, which would send a powerful signal of Member States' commitment to peacebuilding and sustaining peace as core United Nations activity.

Climate change is another issue that could potentially trigger conflicts. Solomon Islands, like other Pacific island countries, is at the forefront of the impacts of climate change. Indeed, an unstable climate and the subsequent displacement and relocation of peoples can exacerbate some of the core drivers of conflict, such as migratory pressures, clash of cultures and competition for limited resources. Those are threats to the very existence of humankind and could very well morph into threats to global peace and security.

Our current reform efforts must therefore take that growing threat very seriously, which is why the Pacific small island developing States have been requesting the Security Council to also address the issue of climate change. It is also why I will again reiterate our call for the appointment of a special representative on climate and security.

Mr. Castro Córdoba (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly for convening this important high-level meeting to promote the efforts and opportunities that the United Nations can utilize to strengthen its work in peacebuilding and in achieving sustained peace.

My country associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Panama on behalf of the Human Security Network (see A/72/PV.85). In addition, we would like to make some remarks in our national capacity.

I would like to focus on three areas that my country considers essential: human rights, sustainable development and education.

It is undeniable that human rights are central to achieving and preserving peace. Promoting and defending them in their most comprehensive sense is the best prevention tool we have. The observance of human rights is directly related to respect for the rule of law, democracy and peaceful coexistence. The global governance of human rights that we have built contributes to the effectiveness and sustainability of United Nations peace efforts. That is why it is essential to support and strengthen it.

At the same time, it is important to reiterate that there can be no sustainable development without peace or peace without sustainable development, and that we must improve and support the activities undertaken by the entities of the United Nations development system, as they not only support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but also contribute to the consolidation and sustainability of peace. We must focus on comprehensive strategies in which we ensure freedom, security and respect for all human rights, as well as the empowerment of women, and a global commitment to building just and democratic societies that contribute not only to the achievement of peace but also to safeguarding it.

The third fundamental area is education, as it is a vital prevention tool for laying the foundations for a lasting solution. The experience of my country following the abolition of the army in 1948 was the freeing up of resources from military expenditures, allowing the country to devote them to investment in social development and to the fulfilment of the rights to education and health. Therefore, ensuring early and inclusive education for children that emphasizes the importance of peaceful conflict resolution and the acceptance of differences is key to creating a society that considers peaceful interactions as the necessary way to resolve disputes.

In conclusion, the process of achieving sustained peace must be inclusive with a primary focus on prevention and must flow equitably across the three pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, development and human rights. The level and number of participants in the event that we are witnessing today is an indication of the importance of the topic for our delegations. We must build partnerships and work towards a culture of prevention that has world peace and security at its core. We must make multilateralism our collective tool to combat challenges and achieve sustainable peace.

Mrs. Moldoisaeva (Kyrgyzstan): At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, for the initiative he has taken in organizing this high-level meeting, which provides an excellent opportunity to discuss the crucially important theme of peacebuilding, including United Nations capacity in this area. It also presents us with an excellent opportunity to discuss ways to support and assist in the maintenance of peace with the participation of civil society, including women's groups and youth representatives, the private sector, regional and subregional organizations and academia.

We regret to have to state — and in this we agree with the Secretary-General — that the world is not currently a peaceful place. In this regard, we must learn how best to work to prevent conflicts, what tools we have at our disposal, how much we can use these tools and what we can do to improve the situation.

In the twin resolutions on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture — resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) — Member States recognized that sustaining peace in the broad sense is the goal and that the process of building a shared vision of society should be based on the needs of all population groups. These resolutions note that Member States need to increase the effectiveness of their collective efforts aimed at preserving peace at all stages of conflict and in all its dimensions. The resolutions also stress that preserving peace is essential to preventing the emergence, escalation, continuation or recurrence of conflicts.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, dated 19 January 2018 (A/72/707), and we note with satisfaction that the recommendations and views contained therein are clearly aimed at implementing practical solutions to existing issues related to the functioning of the peacebuilding architecture and are the basis for further discussions by Member States.

We agree that the task of sustaining peace is a shared task and responsibility of Governments and all other national stakeholders, including through the setting of priorities, the implementation of strategies and the management of activities to preserve peace in the implementation of the principle of inclusiveness. We recognize the need to overcome the disunity of the United Nations system and increase its capacity, which will strengthen its ability to support Member States in their efforts to establish and preserve peace and to respond promptly and effectively to conflicts and crises, including by strengthening strategic and operational partnerships among the United Nations, national Governments and other key stakeholders, including international, regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions, civil society, youth organizations and the private sector, taking into account national priorities and policies.

We support the increased participation of women in peacebuilding and sustaining peace and the involvement of young people. It is also necessary to resolve one of the main issues of concern, namely, the issue of financing the United Nations in the field of peacebuilding. We hope that Member States will consider this issue in detail, taking into account existing and prospective financial resources, based on increased transparency, accountability and efficiency.

In conclusion, I express my hope for the successful outcome of this high-level meeting in order to send a powerful signal that the United Nations will be able to successfully develop and adapt flexibly to the changing environment, becoming more modern and effective in addressing the challenges before us that are threatening peace and stability.

Mr. Cardi (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/72/PV.83).

The high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace offers a unique opportunity to further develop the sustaining peace agenda and to strengthen the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. Italy expresses its deep gratitude to President Lajčák for his commitment and leadership in carrying out this initiative.

Giving substance to the sustaining peace agenda means looking at the future of the United Nations in a thoughtful way. Italy welcomes the recent report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707) and commends his remarkable efforts on this crucial issue. Italy reaffirms its strong commitment to supporting the Secretary-General in putting his recommendations into practice, linking prevention, mediation and the promotion of and respect for human rights and development in a coherent and comprehensive vision for peace, security, and economic and social growth.

For this reason, Italy has decided to participate once again in the Peacebuilding Commission and increase its contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund and to the conflict-prevention activities of the Department of Political Affairs. Italy stresses the need for predictable and sustainable financing of the sustaining peace agenda and is committed to identifying ways to urgently fulfil such need.

The consensual draft resolution to be adopted by the General Assembly (A/72/L.49) will give Member States the opportunity to enhance their engagement in this process, in view of the review of the peacebuilding architecture in 2020.

The sustaining peace agenda stresses the need for a holistic approach covering the pillars of security, human rights and development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also places great emphasis on the strong link between peace and development. What is now needed more than ever is a common effort to move from vision to action. The challenges we are facing in regions such as the Mediterranean, the Sahel and the Horn of Africa require comprehensive and prompt action by all of us. The full implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, the gender equality initiative and the youth, peace and security agenda are first steps in the right direction.

The capacity of the United Nations is unparalleled and must be fully exploited by improving synergy, cooperation and coordination among all United Nations actors at Headquarters and on the ground. In this sense, Italy would also like to reiterate its full support for the United Nations reform proposals presented by the Secretary-General, the implementation of which we consider to be intimately connected to the realization of the sustaining peace agenda.

As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, we welcome the important role that the Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office are also called to play in sustaining peace, in view of the new architecture of the peace and security pillar. At the same time, we recognize the need for strengthened partnerships among the United Nations, international, regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions, civil-society organizations, women's groups, youth organizations and the private sector. The scale and nature of the challenge of sustaining peace call for a collective effort that Italy is also undertaking in a spirit of full cooperation and European cohesion through its split term with the Netherlands in the Security Council in 2017-2018.

Mr. Ry Tuy (Cambodia): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, for putting together this timely meeting on such an important topic. I would also like to express my country's appreciation to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, for his insightful report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707).

The Sustainable Development Goals — and in particular their full implementation — should serve as fundamental building blocks in the attainment of sustainable peace worldwide. Just as there can be no peace without development, there can be no development without peace. Indeed, sustainable peace and sustainable development are mutually reinforcing in nature, and it is a strongly held belief of the Cambodian Government that education is central to building long-lasting peace for all.

Investing in education contributes to sustainable peace globally. It contributes to a knowledgeable and skilled workforce, increased employment levels and reductions in levels of poverty and inequality, while undercutting radicalization levels and extremist views. Investing in education is as essential to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals as it is to sustaining peace worldwide.

Sustaining global peace requires a focused, well-coordinated effort, particularly as it relates to post-conflict situations. The United Nations plays an important role in this regard, as United Nations peacekeeping operations have been instrumental in helping countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace.

Over the past decade, Cambodia has contributed around 5,000 Blue Helmet troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations worldwide. Partnering with the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme and other actors, Cambodia's Mine Action Centre has developed a holistic approach to assisting and supporting victims by implementing demining projects with a strong community-development focus, thus contributing to a safer and more secure world.

Cambodia remains deeply committed to the peaceful settlement of disputes. In line with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, Cambodia strongly believes that the principles of respect for the sovereign equality, independence and territorial integrity of States, as well as non-interference in their domestic affairs, play an important part in building peace that lasts long into the future. We also recognize the important role of women in conflict prevention, which is an important contribution to sustaining peace.

As we move forward, we need to ensure that any and all reforms of the United Nations peacebuilding efforts lead to a coherent approach to sustaining peace. To this end, we must ensure that sustainable financing is available. We should strengthen links among the relevant funds. Serious discussions should be held in this regard, including with the private sector and international financial institutions.

As we look forward to the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture in 2020, Cambodia emphasizes that peacebuilding efforts require robust structures that help avoid fragmentation. All parts of the United Nations must work together towards one goal — preventing conflict and sustaining peace worldwide. Sustainable financing and an effective response on the ground, together with effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, can help us to attain the vision set out in the Preamble of United Nations Charter — "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

In conclusion, we welcome the draft resolution on peacebuilding and sustaining peace to be adopted today (A/72/L.49). Cambodia stands ready to work with all its partners towards the attainment of this goal.

Mr. Coulibaly (Mali) (*spoke in French*): Mali remains convinced that, despite the scale and nature of the threats to peace, its sustainability is a challenge that is within our reach, in particular through strategic and operational partnerships among national Governments, the United Nations and other stakeholders, including international organizations, international financial institutions, development banks and civil-society organizations. Sustainable and social development, sustained economic growth, good governance and poverty eradication, on an inclusive basis, constitute a parallel and even an indispensable prerequisite for the sustainability of peace.

As the Assembly is aware, my country is engaged in a process to end the crisis, embodied in the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, the implementation of which is the only guarantee of lasting peace in Mali and in the Sahel region. In this regard, the establishment of interim authorities in the northern regions of the country, the effectiveness of the Operational Coordination Mechanism, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the reform of the security sector are strong actions that deserve to be highlighted.

In its determination to meet the challenge of sustainable peace at the national level, Mali benefits from the support of its bilateral and multilateral partners, including the United Nations through its specialized agencies, in particular the Peacebuilding Fund, which, beyond Mali's borders, invests in supporting peace in the Liptako-Gourma region. Moreover, the Group of Five for the Sahel has been universally welcomed as a tool for peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Sahel region and beyond. In that regard, we believe the proposals made by the Secretary-General in his report (A/72/707) are quite relevant.

Mr. Mayong Onon (Malaysia): Malaysia joins other speakers in commending the President of the General Assembly for convening this important high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

We wish to align ourselves with the statement delivered yesterday by the representative of Venezuela (see A/72/PV.83) on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We commend the Permanent Representatives of Bangladesh and Lithuania, the co-facilitators of the intergovernmental consultations on draft resolution A/72/L.49, to be adopted by the General Assembly. We are also pleased with the comprehensive, transparent and inclusive approach undertaken by the co-facilitators, and the flexibility demonstrated by all delegations during the negotiations on the draft resolution.

Malaysia welcomes the various resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, such as resolution 70/262, on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, and resolution 70/304, on strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution. The landmark identical resolutions on the peacebuilding architecture review, adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council in April 2016 — resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), respectively — provided an impetus to international interventions on prevention and peacebuilding.

Today we are focusing our attention on sustaining peace, as highlighted by the Secretary-General and the Organization, which constitutes a paradigm shift in how we think about sustaining peace and how we address and resolve conflicts around the globe. In that regard, Malaysia believes that sustaining peace should be built on a more coordinated, integrated and inclusive system-wide approach by all United Nations bodies, together with all stakeholders — particularly women and youth, regional and subregional organizations, civil societies and non-governmental organizations, the media, the private sector and international financial institutions — in a way that ensures national ownership.

My delegation would like to underscore the need for peacebuilding and sustaining peace to be aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the various ongoing United Nations reform efforts. The eradication of hunger and poverty, as well as economic revitalization and stabilization, must be among the core objectives of peacebuilding and sustaining peace initiatives.

We are of the view that building lasting peace also requires predictable, sustained and adequate financing. It is worthwhile to invest in and maintain peace. Indeed, peace is a fragile thing. Ultimately, sustaining peace requires the courage and political will of all stakeholders. Malaysia, together with the international community, will do its part to further this noble endeavour.

Mr. Biang (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this high-level event devoted to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. My delegation is very pleased.

Today's debate is essentially aimed at encouraging a genuine structural transformation of the peace and security architecture of the United Nations. That necessary transformation is an opportunity for our Organization and our countries to adapt our mechanisms for promoting peace and security to a constantly evolving global context of crises and conflicts.

While it is true that the efforts of the United Nations continue to improve, we note that the threats to international peace and security are increasingly numerous and elaborate, sometimes taking unpredictable forms. That is why Gabon firmly believes that prevention remains an indispensable tool that must be at the centre of our actions if we are to build lasting peace. Our collective efforts in prevention have so far been scarcely visible, poorly adapted and poorly funded. Indeed, the scarce and inadequate resources allocated to our Organization's actions for prevention and peacebuilding have contributed substantially to the resurgence of crises in times of transition or to the emergence of new conflicts. In that connection, Gabon welcomes the Secretary-General's willingness to support United Nations prevention and peacebuilding mechanisms through adequate and predictable funding.

It is also important to enhance the synergy between the sustainable development and the peace and security pillars of the United Nations. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is indeed the best way to ensure peacebuilding and sustaining peace globally. We must tackle the root causes of conflict, including inequality, poverty and youth unemployment. That, in our view, is the best weapon for peace. The effective participation of women and young people at all levels of the various mechanisms and institutions for conflict prevention and resolution is vital. Financial, material and technological support for the implementation of the SDGs is essential to the promotion of lasting peace, particularly in developing countries in general and African countries in particular.

The financing of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development must be seen as a necessity for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. That funding must also enable the capacity-building of countries that, like Gabon, are facing new security threats, such as poaching and illegal wildlife trafficking.

Effective consideration of the new challenges in this process of restructuring the United Nations peace architecture should make it possible to strengthen it and adopt a more comprehensive approach. Such an approach also requires the consolidation of partnerships between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in order to bolster their resilience and that of their member States. That is the purpose of the initiatives led by Gabon as current Chair of the Economic Community of Central African

States, whose objective is to make the Organization more efficient and effective, and capable of meeting the requirements of lasting peace.

Finally, the effects of climate change and environmental degradation, combined with population growth, are significantly reducing access to existing resources for most people. That situation could become a source of instability in certain regions in the near future. It is up to us to begin to jointly reflect on the establishment of prevention mechanisms in order to face what could one day be a threat to international peace and security.

The fight against climate change is an important tool for the sustainability of peace. Gabon intends to pursue its efforts to mobilize the necessary resources to curb the horrors of climate change and push for appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures.

In conclusion, peace and sustainable development are two sides of the same coin. Achieving our climate and sustainable development goals is essential if we are to make peace sustainable.

Mr. Morejón Pazmiño (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): We find ourselves in one of the most complex stages of our history, which is why we must tackle the root causes that have led to an increase in conflicts and threats and created a more dangerous environment for United Nations efforts to maintain peace. That is why President Lajčák's convening of this meeting is so timely and I thank him personally.

Over the past few days, we have heard a series of very timely and appropriate statements with a shared goal. We must naturally pursue all paths likely to lead to peace and prevent war. We cannot speak of peacebuilding while hunger and poverty persist. Peace and security are linked to sustainable development, and the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals is key to achieving peace. That is why there must be political commitment to ensuring financing, technical cooperation and technology transfer.

We must, however, lead by example. Ecuador, on 20 September 2017, was one of the first countries to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as it took seriously the readiness of all of society to prevent further manifestations of that scourge that leads to war, death and destruction. Ecuador maintains a key principle — achieving total and complete disarmament.

In statements made over the past few days, we have heard some very important examples. The President of the Republic of Colombia was kind enough to very briefly mention Ecuador in the context of the peace process. I am grateful that he did so, because it gives me the opportunity to explain a bit further regarding the relation between our two brotherly nations.

For more than 40 years, Ecuador has been consistent and united with regard to the Colombian peace process. We have taken in more than 62,000 Colombian citizens as refugees. We have taken them in as a gesture of solidarity. We have no refugee camps. That is why these refugees have been included in the social development of my country. They are always welcome. We also have a list of more than 200,000 Colombian citizens that have sought refuge in my country. Those cases are being reviewed. We have been very supportive in offering our capital to host peace conversations between the Ejército de Liberación Nacional and the Government of Colombia. We have done it very willingly with a view to achieving the greater good — peace. That peace affects the entire region, not simply one country.

Recently, we suffered a setback to the peace process. Three Ecuadorian journalists were abducted by dissident cells of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, which operate in a lethal combination with drug traffickers. They were assassinated for no reason, except as a reminder that they are untouchable. Such actions are unacceptable. A few days ago, an Ecuadorian couple that ventured close to the border with our neighbouring country was abducted. We need to nip such incidents in the bud and prevent fear from taking root in our territory.

In 1998, Ecuador signed a peace agreement with its neighbour, Peru, that put an end to a 100-year border issue between our States and cemented a sincere and united friendship that seeks only development. Investments in both countries have increased more than 3,000 per cent since the signing of the peace agreement in 1998. With that example, I simply mean to show how countries like Ecuador contribute to peacebuilding in a practical and apparent manner.

Finally, I note that the identical resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council in April 2016 (resolution 70/262 and resolution 2282 (2016), respectively) offer a broader view of peacebuilding and strengthen the mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission, which enables us to appreciate efforts made in that regard and to focus on the renewed commitment of the United Nations and its primary legislative organs in facing the challenges to building lasting peace. Ecuador will always be ready to act in furtherance of that goal.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina thanks the President of the General Assembly for organizing this timely high-level meeting and once again welcomes the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707).

We believe that this report is in line with the general approach and recommendations included in his proposals for the structural reform of the United Nations in the areas of peace and security, and development and administration, with a view to significantly improving the performance of the Organization.

Argentina supports the idea that the United Nations should adopt a holistic and inclusive strategic approach to activities related to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, sustainable peace and development — one that includes women and young people as key actors in that transformation. Both the proposed reform and the report submitted can help to overcome the fragmentation of the Organization's work by increasing the coherence and coordination of activities under the different pillars and in all phases of conflicts, in line with the sustainable peace narrative.

In that regard, for example, Argentina understands that the Organization's peace missions, as part of the United Nations system, could assist host States in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, greatly enhancing their contribution to peace and development almost without requiring additional resources. Peace missions are well positioned to address the underlying causes of conflict and even to identify possible actions that could contribute to sustainable development. That role should be carried out with a perspective and design that takes the 2030 Agenda into account from the outset so as to collaborate with the host countries in reaching their Sustainable Development Goals.

We reiterate the need to pay more attention to the root causes of conflicts and the importance of finding solutions based on national responsibility by prioritizing prevention and the maintenance of peace and focusing on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In that regard, we support the idea of strengthening the functions of the Peacebuilding Support Office through enhancing its role as a liaison among the three pillars and as a partner in United Nations initiatives and instruments.

We recognize the need to secure adequate and predictable financing for peacebuilding activities, particularly through the Peacebuilding Fund. In that connection, we hope to continue discussing relevant options as presented by the Secretary-General in the framework of the work of the General Assembly. Meanwhile, Argentina has begun to voluntarily contribute to the Peacebuilding Commission as a show of support for its important work and to peacebuilding and sustaining peace activities in general.

Financing for peacebuilding and development activities are linked. They are complementary and mutually reinforcing. In that regard, South-South and triangular cooperation are important examples of how different developing economies can be mutually beneficial. That is why we should consider similar systems when financing peacebuilding activities.

Finally, we express our support for the draft procedural resolution (A/72/L.49), to be adopted this evening, so as to enable the Secretary-General to further the implementation of the proposed reforms in ongoing consultation with the Member States.

Mr. Al-Harthy (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this important high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

My country's delegation would also like to thank the Secretary-General and to welcome his vision, as reflected in his report (A/72/707). It is a good report as it looks towards the future and represents a road map for the United Nations to deal with crises. We support the reforms that he is carrying out in that regard.

When we talk about the United Nations and the role it plays, we must remember that the international Organization was founded essentially in order to maintain peace and security. The current broad scope of the tasks and the work of the United Nations should not be at the expense of its main objectives, which are the same as those being discussed at this high-level meeting. Had the United Nations concentrated on preventive diplomacy and the prevention of wars and conflicts, it would have spared the world a great deal of tragedy, loss and expense, and it would have spared great efforts and spared funds that could have been used to implement other objectives in the field of sustainable development, inter alia.

The foreign policy of the Sultanate of Oman takes into consideration the noble principles of the United Nations. Since His Majesty the Sultan assumed power in 1970, my country has worked hard to play a positive role in helping to avoid and prevent conflicts. It cooperates with the United Nations and peace-loving nations in an attempt to solve problems and conflicts by diplomatic and peaceful means.

Peacebuilding and sustainable peace can be achieved only through national consensus and the participation of all national parties. The United Nations, as a foreign party, should support countries in facilitating peace processes in creative ways, according to the circumstances of each country. We cannot speak about peacebuilding and sustaining peace without talking about the Security Council, which shoulders the main responsibility within the United Nations of maintaining international peace and security. It can participate effectively in diplomatic efforts to solve crises, peacebuilding and sustaining peace by using its influence to defuse and end conflicts.

In the broader sense and at the international level, the United Nations, with the participation of us all, particularly the influential States, should deal with the political issues and problems suffered by certain countries and societies. These must be addressed in a just and consistent manner, in line with international law, and by avoiding double standards, which are harmful to peacebuilding.

In conclusion, the United Nations and the role it plays, especially in the area of security and peace, are mistrusted in many parts of the world. The time has therefore come for the Organization to make an important change in order to eliminate that impression. Hopefully, this meeting will serve as a first step towards reaching that end.

Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a great pleasure and honour for the delegation of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea to address the General Assembly in order to contribute to this important debate on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. At the outset, we wish to welcome the high representatives of States Members of the United Nations and other multilateral organizations of civil society and of the private sector. It is an honour to participate alongside them in this critical debate.

The complexity and prolongation of existing conflicts and its links with violent extremism, terrorism and organized crime make it necessary for the international community and particularly the United Nations to explore how to restructure the architecture of the Organization in order to best address the root causes of those conflicts. In that regard, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea notes and acknowledges the vision and efforts of Secretary-General Guterres to increase the effectiveness of the United Nations in peacebuilding and sustaining peace, as described in his reports (A/72/525 and A/72/772), in which he presents his proposal for restructuring the Organization's pillar of peace and security and the creation of two new departments — political affairs and peacebuilding — and his report (A/72/707) on progress made and remaining challenges with a view to supporting peacebuilding and sustaining peace worldwide.

Specifically, we express our appreciation and welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General to integrate a gender-based and youth-inclusive perspective, in line with Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2242 (2015), on women and peace and security, as well as resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security. We also agree that investing in inclusive, comprehensive and sustainable development is the best way to prevent violent conflicts. We welcome the proposed reforms to the development system of the United Nations and the peacebuilding architecture to make the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development central to those efforts.

As the Secretary-General states in his report, peacebuilding is, above all, the responsibility of Member States. In that regard, we commend the unique work and role of the Peacebuilding Commission for its support for peacebuilding worldwide, particularly for its initiatives in Africa. We therefore understand the rationale for the Secretary-General's proposals to strengthen the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund. We believe, however, that greater clarity is needed about the potential repercussions that the restructuring of the three pillars of the United Nations–peace and security, human rights and development–could have, in particular the restructuring of the peace and security and peacebuilding pillar and the implications that this might have for the principle of the sovereignty of countries and the equitable, just and geographical representation of Member States in the proposed new structures.

We understand the urgency of and the need for reform, and we firmly believe that investing in conflict prevention, as described in the Charter of the United Nations, is the best strategy to put an end to conflict in a peaceful and lasting way, which is why it is crucial not to act too hastily in such processes.

For these reasons, we should like to request greater clarity, including in the form of practical examples and tables, which would help us to better understand these reforms and predict their potential impact at the national, subregional, regional and international levels, particularly in areas of the world that risk becoming blind spots on the global agenda, such as, for example, the Central African region.

In that regard, we would appreciate having more frequent and substantive informal meetings, with practical examples, as we await a more comprehensive report on the reform of the peace and security pillar later on during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Itegboje (Nigeria): Let me at the outset thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened this high-level meeting. We also thank the Secretary-General for his remarks.

Nigeria aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.83).

This meeting is being convened at a time when the global community is facing unprecedented threats, geopolitical tensions, social dislocation, cyberattacks, the threat of climate change and terrorism, inter alia. Nigeria has had its fair share of such crises, including when, in another vicious attack, Boko Haram insurgents annexed 14 local governments in Borno state, in the north-eastern part of Nigeria. However, upon his assumption of office, in 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari ensured the recovery of the annexed territories, and today, Boko Haram insurgents no longer hold any territory in Nigeria.

General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, addressed the approach of the United Nations to peace by adopting a long-term perspective and focusing on prevention. The resolutions also call for a broader concept that encompasses peacebuilding and links peace and security with development, human rights and humanitarian action. Sustaining peace also emphasizes inclusive dialogue, mediation, accountable institutions, good governance, access to justice and gender equality.

Nigeria is of the opinion that while sustaining peace should not be seen as an infringement on sovereignty, it should also not be used as a pretext for infringing on the sovereignty of Member States, as the centrality of a national and inclusive ownership of sustaining peace cannot be overemphasized. The emphasis on prevention is commendable, and we recommend that the peacebuilding architecture should have, as a component, an early-warning system that should be accompanied by an early-action system.

We also wish to stress the importance of ensuring adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding, exploring innovative financing solutions, as well as options for assessed and voluntary funding, as requested by the twin resolutions. In this regard, the importance of the Peacebuilding Fund cannot be overemphasized.

We call for closer collaboration between the United Nations and regional and subregional initiatives related to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are good examples of regional and subregional initiatives that have made great strides in the area of peacebuilding and sustaining peace through collaborative efforts.

We wish to note that draft resolution A/72/L.49, to be adopted by the General Assembly, is a key development that will confirm the strong commitment of its member States to the cause of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Nigeria has consistently been in the vanguard of supporting and participating in international efforts at conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustaining peace — subregionally, regionally and globally. Since its independence in 1960, Nigeria has been an active participant in United Nations peacekeeping missions, deploying military contingents, unarmed military observers, military staff officers, formed police units, police advisers and civilian experts to more than 25 United Nations missions. According to a 2016 report published by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Nigeria is the country contributing the 14th-largest number of troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Nigeria also shares the view that the maintenance of human rights is critical to sustaining peace and has therefore embarked on mainstreaming human rights elements into its security architecture. In that context, progress has been made in enhancing civil-military relations and establishing legislative oversight over the security sector in relation to defence spending, procurement and general budgetary matters. Efforts have also been stepped up to create a better partnership between civilians and the armed forces.

The national security reform has also had substantial linkages with the regional approach to good governance and the promotion of the rule of law. This is manifested in Nigeria's support of the African Union Peace and Security Architecture and the ECOWAS Declaration of Political Principles, which call for the promotion of multiparty democracy and representative governance in the West African subregion.

Nigeria also believes that ensuring the meaningful participation of women and girls in all areas of society is vital. Gender equality yields greater economic growth and higher standards of living; women's participation in peacebuilding also helps prevent any relapse into conflict. The Government has rolled out its second national action plan, which provides an overarching framework that has become the Nigerian model for addressing emerging security issues and social gaps and ensuring that substantial contributions are made by women to peacebuilding and the maintenance of peace in the country.

The issue of youth unemployment plays a part in violent conflict and the rise of global terrorism. The Nigerian Government has therefore established a number of interventionist programmes to tackle this problem under the umbrella of the N-Power Youth Employment Programme. We are also pursuing our commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals and the overarching social and economic goals of Agenda 2063 of the African Union by launching an ambitious three-year, medium-term economic development strategy, the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan. More importantly, corruption is being tackled headlong, as it is seen as a major obstacle to the economic growth of the country.

In conclusion, we commend the Secretary-General's efforts to bring together his reform proposals on the United Nations system, including peace and security, development and internal management, as well as proposals on the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. We look forward to an outcome document that will feed into the next review of the peacebuilding architecture, in 2020. Nigeria will continue to support international efforts aimed at peacebuilding and sustaining peace across the world. In order to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, we call on the rest of the world to emulate and join Africa in its ambitious programme to silence the guns by the year 2020.

Mrs. Taremba (Zimbabwe): Let me join others in commending the President of the General Assembly for having convened this very important meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. It is my sincere hope that our deliberations will provide us with the opportunity to share best practices and exchange ideas on building and preserving peace. This dialogue provides us with a platform to renew our commitment to conflict prevention and to examine ways in which the United Nations can effectively assist Member States in preventing the outbreak, escalation and recurrence of conflict.

Zimbabwe aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.83).

The constantly changing dynamics of the threats to international peace and security confronting the world today require us to examine our tools for building, preserving and sustaining peace. More investment in conflict prevention is needed to free resources towards development. Zimbabwe firmly believes that achieving sustainable development holds the key to sustaining peace. In that vein, it is our considered view that investing in development is the best form of conflict prevention.

The twin resolutions on sustaining peace adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council in 2016 — resolution 70/262 and resolution 2282 (2016), respectively — clearly acknowledge that Member States have the primary responsibility to build and sustain peace. In our view, national ownership is the main cornerstone for peacebuilding, and efforts to preserve peace are more effective when they are all-inclusive. In that regard, the United Nations must provide coherent, comprehensive and coordinated support, working with

Member States and other stakeholders before, during and after conflicts.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707), which further develops how the partnership between the United Nations and its Member States can be strengthened to enhance the building and sustaining of peace. It also outlines an ambitious plan of action on how to build and sustain peace. It is therefore important that the United Nations work with Member States across the three pillars of the United Nations to achieve our shared goal of sustaining peace.

According to a recent United Nations-World Bank report, more resources are spent on addressing the aftermath of conflicts than on preventing them from flaring up and escalating. However, the economic benefits of prevention far outweigh the cost of funding peacekeeping operations. In our view, predictable and sustainable funding is integral to sustaining peace through all stages of the conflict cycle. The options for the financing of peacebuilding activities set out in the Secretary-General's report need to be carefully examined in order to address the imbalance between spending on conflict and investing in peace.

The recommendations contained in the report need further consideration through the appropriate intergovernmental processes and approval by the General Assembly. We look forward to an in-depth discussion on practical steps towards building sustainable peace.

Turning to the recent peaceful transition process in Zimbabwe, which in November 2017 ushered in a new political dispensation, it is heartening to note that the leadership has set the country on a new development trajectory that has generated hope and excitement as to what the future holds. The Government has put in place a clear institutional framework to guide the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. We wish to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of our people for a better life by addressing the economic and social drivers of conflict in a more comprehensive manner and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the spirit of leaving no one behind.

The Government has also committed itself to a credible and violence-free election. As we prepare the groundwork for the watershed elections to be held in the next few months, we are cognizant of the important role that youth and women could play in ensuring a peaceful, participatory and inclusive electoral process.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker for this meeting.

Before adjourning, let me remind members that action on draft resolution A/72/L.49 will be taken after we exhaust the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

United Nations

A/72/PV.87

General Assembly
Seventy-second session

Official Records

87th plenary meeting
Thursday, 26 April 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lajčák .... (Slovakia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Tevi (Vanuatu), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 140 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/72/713/Add.4)

The Acting President: In keeping with established practice, I would like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/72/713/Add.4, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/72/713/Add.3, the Central African Republic and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela have made the payments necessary to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes due note of the information contained in document A/72/713/Add.4?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 65 (*continued*)

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

High-level meeting of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/707)

Draft resolution (A/72/L.49)

The Acting President: Before we proceed, I would like to appeal to all speakers to keep their statements brief and concise, in order to make maximum use of the limited time we have remaining for this high-level meeting. To enable all on the list of speakers to be heard, statements in plenary meetings should be limited to three minutes when speakers take the floor in their national capacity. As members will recall, in its resolution 71/323 of 8 September 2017, the General Assembly called for strict adherence by each speaker to the time limits in the Assembly, in particular during high-level meetings. Participants with longer statements are encouraged to read a shorter version of their text and to submit their full statements to the Secretariat for posting on the PaperSmart portal.

Also in accordance with resolution 71/323, the "all protocol observed" principle is recommended, whereby participants are encouraged to refrain from the listing of standard protocol expressions during their statements. Bearing in mind the time limit, I would like to appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a reasonable pace so that interpretation into the six official United Nations languages may be provided properly.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

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I appeal for the cooperation of all speakers in observing the time limits for statements, so that all those inscribed will be heard in a timely manner.

Mr. Tiare (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): First of all, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), both adopted on 27 April 2016.

This high-level meeting is timely because the many current challenges to peace ensure that there is no longer any need to demonstrate its relevance. It also comes after the publication of the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707), which describes the progress that has been made in the implementation of the resolutions and makes specific relevant recommendations, and for which my delegation commends the Secretary-General.

It is well known that the cost of conflicts to States and the international community is much greater than the cost of preventing them. We need to put particular emphasis on prevention in order to ensure that they do nor start, or at least that they are not continued or aggravated. Prevention must therefore be a primary objective, both for States and the United Nations, and it must be at the heart of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. This can only be done by joining forces from the national level to the United Nations, at the subregional and regional levels and through strategic partnerships, as the Secretary-General so cogently described in his report.

However, the fact is that peacebuilding and sustaining peace are the primary responsibility of national Governments, which must determine the necessary priorities and strategies by involving all sectors of society. But peacebuilding and sustaining peace initiatives can succeed only if they have sufficient, predictable, sustainable and consistent funding through the support of multilateral and bilateral partners and the private sector. Unfortunately, where the financing of peacebuilding is concerned, much remains to be done to ensure that sufficient funds are allocated to countries affected by conflicts. My country therefore calls for increased contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund in order to meet the needs of the countries that require it. We must also avoid spreading our efforts too thin and over too many peacebuilding and sustaining peace initiatives by focusing on aligning national and regional strategies and resources on sustainable peace.

Like other countries of the Sahel, Burkina Faso is facing the challenge of maintaining peace, owing to security threats. We have therefore worked with our four partner countries in creating the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), and we are playing an active part in initiatives aimed at ensuring lasting peace in the Sahel by establishing the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, whose mandate is to fight terrorism. The Force must be operational, because without security there can be no development and without development there can be no peace.

As a reminder, in October 2014 and in 2015, my country experienced a popular uprising and a political transition, and since then the Government has made preserving social peace its top priority. During that difficult period, my country received support from the Peacebuilding Fund through financing for projects. Today, the Government is undertaking institutional reform in order to strengthen democracy and governance, particularly through a number of initiatives, including an inclusive and permanent dialogue to ensure economic and social stability, which are preconditions for peacebuilding.

Those initiatives include the creation of a High Council for Social Dialogue and a High Council for Reconciliation and National Unity, whose objective is to achieve lasting peace through national reconciliation. We also have an emergency programme for the Sahel to set up essential socioeconomic and security infrastructure for people living in the northern part of our country. In order to build peace, we must address the root causes of conflict: poverty, exclusion, discrimination, the effects of climate change and so forth.

The many challenges to peacebuilding and sustaining peace attest to the close link between security, development and human rights. My delegation calls for the implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations and for the adoption of a holistic approach to current and future reforms, because our ultimate goal is to achieve lasting peace by 2030. We must therefore strengthen partnerships, coordination and cooperation among the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations to ensure better support for peacebuilding initiatives.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): Indonesia thanks the President for this very important initiative on sustaining peace. It is an opportune time to have the discussion we are having today, given the many challenges the world is facing.

We would like to associate ourselves with the statements made by the delegations of Venezuela, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Turkey, on behalf of Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea and Australia (see A/72/PV.83), and Mexico, on behalf of the Group of Friends of Sustaining Peace (see A/72/PV.85). We share many of the views that the Secretary-General presented in his remarks on sustaining peace and peacebuilding, and we welcome his report (A/72/707) in that regard.

As a country that has gone through its own transition to a peaceful and democratic State, Indonesia has borne witness to various challenges and opportunities in building peace. From our own experience, we learned that achieving peace is difficult, but sustaining it is even harder. Sustaining peace needs collective work, and this forum could serve as a great avenue for advancing our common work in promoting this agenda. It is clear that United Nations peacebuilding efforts are still facing the challenges of slow disbursements of funding, insufficient allocation to respond to real demand, the need to do more on prevention and the necessity of linking peace with development efforts.

Lasting peace cannot be brought about on the ground if the affected countries themselves do not take full charge of their destiny. We need to listen to those countries about what they need, especially as they make the transition into the post-conflict phase. We need to be creative in our approach to supporting United Nations peacebuilding. We need adequate and predictable financing.

Indonesia and Norway are coordinating peacebuilding financing in the Peacebuilding Commission. However, more must be done. We must build resilient communities. No one organ by itself can promote peacebuilding, sustaining peace or the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Stronger and inclusive partnerships are therefore needed — partnerships such as those between the United Nations and the World Bank, the international financial institutions and regional organizations — to link conflict prevention and reconstruction with good governance and economic policies. We need economic incentives as tools for prevention, and we must ensure that development and poverty are adequately addressed, so that conflict will not be the viable alternative for many.

Prevention is the key word. Conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy are part of Indonesia's foreign policy. We believe in the power of diplomacy to prevent or bring conflict and war to an end, as well as to usher in peace. We believe in reconciliation.

Peace is not merely an absence of war. Peace is underpinned by activities that ensure long-term opportunities by which ordinary people, including women and youth, can sustain their lives in a decent way and ensure sustainable development with a view to preventing relapse into conflict. For its part, Indonesia will continue its peacebuilding efforts through South-South and triangular cooperation so as to complement ongoing international peacebuilding efforts. That includes our efforts with our brothers and sisters in Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

Earlier this month, we convened the first ever Indonesia-Africa Forum in Bali, which brought together Indonesia and 47 African countries. It was a meeting that reflected a cross-continental partnership that goes back to the Asia-Africa Forum held in Bandung in 1955, which intended to transform those ties into robust economic relations. Partnership and working together are key to achieving sustainable development and lasting peace.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to peace. For truly lasting peace to be achieved, we have to ensure that no one is being left behind. We have to ensure that the United Nations system works. Every country, large or small, has a responsibility to contribute to peace and security, whether it is in the Security Council or not. As a family of nations, each of us has a role to play in helping each other to improve and enhance global peace. We have to make the system better so as to ensure sustained peace, and in doing so, all the 193 States Members of the United Nations have to contribute — not just the 15 members of the Security Council, irrespective of their type of membership.

We salute the Blue Helmets who preserve peace, and we also salute the many United Nations volunteers who help to build democracy and sustainable development. For its part, Indonesia has been contributing troops for 60 years, not only for preserving peace in conflict areas, but also in development capacity-building and humanitarian assistance in disaster areas. War and conflict are not the only challenges to human security. There are others, including climate change, as experienced in many Caribbean and Pacific islands.

In conclusion, peace is all about humankind. Contributing to global peace and security is enshrined in the Indonesian Constitution, and it is clearly stated in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations that one of the purposes of the Organization is "to maintain international peace and security". Indonesia has contributed and will continue to contribute to this noble quest of humankind, in line with the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): Kazakhstan, which attaches great importance to the topic of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, had expected His Excellency Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Chairman of the Senate of the Republic of Kazakhstan, to deliver a statement today. However, he could not be here with us, so it is with great pleasure that I will now deliver his message to the Assembly. At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, for having convened this high-level meeting on an issue of such importance.

We are living in a time of turbulence and upheaval. Each year brings new challenges such as sectarian strife, migration and refugee crises. Regions that had been considered relatively calm have turned violent and volatile. The arms race is raging, and wars and conflicts are undermining global security. Given those developments, the imperative for peace is growing. As peacebuilding and sustaining peace lie at the heart of the mandate of the United Nations, people around the world look to the United Nations for vision, leadership and action. We in Kazakhstan believe that the United Nations remains the most legitimate and inclusive multilateral body. Our country has for years been demonstrating its firm commitment to the principles and values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and has striven to enhance its cooperation with the Organization. For more than a decade now, the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia has been serving as a good example of political engagement and preventive efforts by the United Nations in our part of the world. I would like to offer our perspective on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, including the practical steps that our country has taken to promote international peace and security.

For many years now Kazakhstan has been a staunch advocate of global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. At the dawn of our independence, we closed down the Semipalatinsk nuclear-test site and voluntarily gave up our nuclear arsenal, and 29 August, the date on which the test site was shut down, has been proclaimed by the General Assembly as the International Day against Nuclear Tests. We believe that a more holistic approach should be taken to peacebuilding. To that end, Kazakhstan has proposed a comprehensive threefold strategy to address conflict: strengthening the security-development nexus, taking a regional approach and coordinating the efforts of United Nations agencies and structures.

We support the idea that sustaining peace is both a goal and a process. In 2016, the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, presented the international community with a manifesto, "The World. The 21st Century", which outlines guiding principles that the international community should take to heart and follow in order to eliminate the scourge of war. Confidence-building measures are a powerful part of the peacebuilding toolbox. As far back as 1992, in this very Hall, President Nazarbayev initiated the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia. Since then, the Conference, which includes 26 States, has emerged as a tangible factor in international politics. Clearly, diplomatic engagement and constructive negotiations should serve as the main means of resolving and preventing all disputes and conflicts. With that in mind, Kazakhstan has been hosting peace talks on Syria and on the Iran nuclear deal, acting as an honest broker and an unbiased manager.

Today, amid mounting sectarian conflicts, terrorism and violent extremism, our world is in dire need of mechanisms that can facilitate genuine dialogue, based on a recognition of individual identities and respect for religious plurality and cultural diversity, one in which stakeholders can listen, hear and talk to one another. Since 2003 Astana has successfully hosted the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, bringing together the representatives of diverse religions as well as prominent politicians and heads of international organizations. We are grateful to the United Nations for its continued support for and involvement in our forum. We fully support the notion that the primary responsibility for implementing peacebuilding strategies lies with Member countries. Member States can improve the prospects for sustainable peace by addressing and tackling social and economic as well as political challenges, engaging their various national actors and in particular creating opportunities for young people and women and promoting their empowerment. Inclusiveness should therefore be at the core of any peacebuilding strategy.

In conclusion, let me say that we should work together with patience and persistence on the tremendous challenge that peacebuilding represents for the entire international community. Only through efficient partnerships can we build long-lasting peace and security on our planet. As Dag Hammarskjöld said,

> "We should, rather, recognize the United Nations for what it is — an admittedly imperfect but indispensable instrument of nations working for a peace evolution towards a more just and secure world order". (*A/3594/Add.1, p.3*)

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The number and the level of the participants in this major event testify to the genuine interest in addressing the challenges that the United Nations faces in the area of peacebuilding. It is only regrettable that certain delegations have taken advantage of this forum and the opportunity it presents for conducting political public relations and making unfounded accusations. If we may, rather than stooping to their level of polemic, we will focus on the issue at hand.

We view United Nations peacebuilding assistance as one of the most important instruments in the Organization's arsenal for assisting States in dealing with the consequences of conflicts and preventing their recurrence. The United Nations has been involved in this type of action for many years now. Member States periodically conduct reviews of it in which they consider States' experiences, the changing realities and the proposals and recommendations in various studies and reports.

We thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his personal efforts and close attention to the problems of peacebuilding. By adopting draft resolution A/72/L.49, the General Assembly will be sending an important signal that Member States are ready to continue to discuss the recommendations in the Secretary-General's thematic report (A/72/707) on developing coherent approaches to the work of the United Nations in peacebuilding and sustaining peace, which are inseparably linked to each other.

I would like to talk specifically about the latter concept. In 2016, following a detailed discussion, the Security Council and the General Assembly adopted twin resolutions — resolutions 2282 (2016) and 70/262, respectively — on the review of the peacebuilding architecture. In those resolutions, Member States made clear what they meant by the importance of sustaining peace. First and foremost, they asserted that it required a common understanding on the part of all sectors of society of what must to be done to tackle conflict and its root causes, promote recovery and prevent relapses. All national stakeholders have a shared responsibility for peace, and the role of the United Nations, when necessary, is to help strengthen the capacities of the recipient country, given that it is the latter that has primary responsibility for all these processes. Since it is the host States that take the lead, any proposal for making sustaining peace a new area in the work of the United Nations demands additional discussion. Member States have not yet discussed any kind of agenda for sustaining peace and have taken no corresponding decisions.

As we all know, according to the twin resolutions, the United Nations is called on to assist States in sustaining peace at any stage in a conflict, and the earlier the better. Nonetheless, in general we fully support the importance of strengthening United Nations efforts to prevent conflict That must be done in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in which it is clearly included, and the relevant decisions of Member States. It is important to emphasize that the States themselves play the leading role in this area as well, since it is their decisions that define the parameters of international support, if it is required at all.

Of course, prevention is better than cure, but a proper cure needs a proper diagnosis and the right choice of treatment, or the cure may be worse than the disease. We believe that every conflict has its own unique collection of causes. Each individual case requires a careful and impartial approach, patient analysis and the quest for an appropriate solution, above all at the national level. Cookie-cutter templates or universal indicators of potential crises can be incorrectly applied and may only do damage. There are all too many examples of that, unfortunately. Assistance from this international Organization should be aimed at eradicating the root causes of crises and facilitating reconciliation and development, not monitoring unclear parameters on which there is no consensus. It is also crucial to ensure that Member States act in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations rather than on the basis of contentious concepts such as so-called humanitarian interventions and the responsibility to protect.

I should also touch on the important issue of human rights. The Organization's 70 years of experience have shown that this topic is often distorted and politicized with a view to influencing national political processes. And yet interference in internal affairs is the most common cause of national and international conflicts today. The United Nations should have no part in that.

Human rights, development, and peace and security are unquestionably interlinked, but they are not directly dependent on one another. Development alone cannot guarantee peace, while peace does not necessarily ensure development. It is therefore important to take account not only of the interlinkages but also the different goals of such processes, as well as which United Nations body or organ is responsible for advancing understanding of them. It is important that the entities of the United Nations system concerned with peacebuilding, peacekeeping, preventive diplomacy, development assistance, human rights and humanitarian assistance strictly respect their mandates and refrain from encroaching on one another's areas of responsibility. That also fully applies to the functions of United Nations country teams and their leaders, the resident coordinators. We take a cautious approach to proposals for focusing their efforts on predicting potential conflicts. In our view, their priorities should be solving existing problems, eliminating the underlying causes of crises and building State institutions' capacity and effectiveness, not duplicating or replacing their work. Where peacebuilding assistance is concerned, its parameters should be defined by the priorities of the host countries, supported by a dedicated intergovernmental advisory body, that is, the Peacebuilding Commission.

We agree on the importance of ensuring adequate, predictable and sustainable financing for United Nations peacebuilding assistance. The Secretary-General already has all the necessary powers and instruments for that. In particular, he heads the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. Within that body, he has the right to involve all United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. That would not only enable the mobilization of resources but would ensure a coordinated approach to resolving administrative and financial problems. The funds and programmes could in their turn make use of their experience of working with non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Such coordination would also help to prevent any duplication of effort.

Only an impartial, non-politicized and transparent approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace can ensure that efforts in that area are effective. It is important to ensure that such assistance is provided in support of the efforts of the recipient States, without mentoring or imposing cookie-cutter solutions. That is the only way that United Nations peacebuilding assistance has the chance to make a qualitative leap and help to achieve sustainable peace.

Mr. Elnour (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my country's delegation would like to express its thanks and appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for convening this high-level meeting on the vital issue of peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We would also like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his report on the subject (A/72/707).

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.83).

Working for peace has always been at the heart of international diplomatic efforts. In 1945 it led to the establishment of the United Nations with the aim of saving humankind from the ravages of war. The work of achieving peace at both international and regional levels is based on some fundamental pillars, the most important of which is respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international law, as well as the charters of relevant regional organizations.

The large numbers of internal armed conflicts in many developing countries constitute a clear demonstration of the strong and direct link between peace and development. Weak development, or none at all, frequently results in armed conflict, which in turn prevents any sustainable development. It is a vicious circle. The General Assembly and Security Council twin resolutions on the subject (resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), respectively) emphasize the close link between peacebuilding and sustaining peace and development. In order to avoid future conflicts in developing countries, therefore, efforts should be made to empower them to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development. We can therefore say that the first step towards empowering developing countries that are currently undergoing internal conflicts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals is supporting them in their efforts to achieve peace. Without that, any environmental, social or economic development is difficult to achieve, if not impossible.

My delegation would like to make a few preliminary suggestions on how to promote collective work with a view to achieving the ultimate goal of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

First, structural changes should be made in humanitarian work, with a focus on helping people to get a decent livelihood, and by linking our humanitarian work with our efforts for peace, with a view to giving those who receive humanitarian assistance the possibility of a decent life while preserving their dignity and helping them to become producers rather than recipients of humanitarian aid.

Second, a foundation should be laid down for a new generation of peacebuilding operations based on two basic pillars: traditional, or what we call hard peacekeeping operations, and soft peacekeeping, which involves initiating support for programmes related to peacebuilding and sustaining peace from the beginning of establishing peacekeeping operations, and installing units in all peacekeeping operations aimed at furthering development. Moreover, a coordination mechanism should be established between peacekeeping operations and the United Nations country teams, coupled with more focus on the engineering component, such as building roads, digging wells and establishing facilities for providing basic services.

Third, the role of the United Nations in conflict mediation and resolution should be strengthened as soon as possible, while reducing the negative effects of conflicts as much as possible.

Fourth, strategic partnerships between the United Nations and relevant regional organizations must be strengthened.

Fifth, we must take into account the local environment in each conflict and provide innovative solutions and initiatives, in cooperation with the Governments of host countries and local communities, according to their needs and circumstances. Efforts should not be focused on certain fields involving donors while ignoring other vital fields that are indispensable for peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Sixth, we must increase allocations to the Peacebuilding Fund. In this regard, my country's delegation would like to support the proposals made by the Secretary-General in his report.

Seventh, top priority should be given to choosing prominent figures who are highly qualified and have varied experience in the work of the United Nations in order to lead United Nations country teams in States where there are conflicts.

Our experience in the Sudan has shown us that lack of development, or weak development, is the basis for internal conflicts, which generate new conflicts that deplete a country's resources and prevent development projects from getting implemented. That tarnishes a country's image and undermines its relationship with the international community, preventing it from getting loans and investments from the private sector. The result is further poverty, deprivation and lack of opportunities, providing fertile ground for new conflicts. An effective way to prevent future internal conflicts and sustain peace in those countries is therefore to support development by investing in all areas so as to assist developing countries in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda.

The current situation in Darfur represents an opportunity to realize the new vision for peacebuilding and sustaining peace by transitioning from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and sustaining peace, while addressing the root causes of the conflict in Darfur. This can be done through support to the United Nations country team, while transferring some of the resources available to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur to support development efforts in the Darfur states, which have great natural and human resources that could, with the help of the international community, form a starting base for launching fast economic growth and unprecedented change in the region. This would provide job opportunities for young people, foster confidence among various sectors of the community and prevent harmful friction between farmers and herders, while establishing an environment conducive to the success of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.

In conclusion, my delegation stresses the importance of the golden opportunity before the international community, as embodied in the United Nations, to achieve peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Darfur. This would fulfil the aspirations of the people of Darfur and represent a successful United Nations experience, in reviving its role in peacebuilding and sustaining peace, which could be applied and utilized in other regions. My delegation hopes that the international community will not miss that opportunity. We reiterate our readiness to fully cooperate and coordinate with all regional and international partners in achieving this great objective. Let us all work towards a new dawn for the United Nations in peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Ms. Beckles (Trinidad and Tobago): Trinidad and Tobago commends the President of the General Assembly for convening this high-level meeting on the very important topic of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, especially at a time when peace is absent from so many parts of the world. As an important basis for our discourse, we have the twin resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council (resolution 70/262 and resolution 2282 (2016)) on the review of the peacebuilding architecture. It is noteworthy that the resolutions stress that Member States need to work better together to sustain peace at all stages of conflict.

Trinidad and Tobago therefore views this debate as a means for further strengthening multilateralism, which is a crucial vehicle for resolving the challenges associated with peacebuilding and sustaining peace. This is an important step in our efforts to deepen effective multilateralism, as the absence of multilateralism is itself a threat to peace. Nonetheless, we concur with the Secretary-General in his report on the subject (A/72/707), which emphasizes that sustaining peace is first and foremost a responsibility of Member States.

In 2015, in this very Hall, Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This landmark agreement was yet another testament to the triumph of multilateralism, especially as it emphasizes a people-centred agenda that leaves no one behind. However, its inclusive and ambitious agenda must not be lost in mere rhetoric. Trinidad and Tobago therefore supports the view that there can be no peace without development and no development without peace, and that there can be neither development or peace without respect for human rights and the rule of law.

The challenge before us is to make the world peaceful and secure. This is of particular concern to small States, which must rely on the international rule of law, the strict observance by all States of the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and the collective security mechanism embodied by the Security Council for their right to a secure, sovereign and peaceful existence to be guaranteed.

For small States such as Trinidad and Tobago and indeed all the States members of the Caribbean Community, the maintenance of international peace and security, including peacebuilding and sustaining peace, are of particular importance. We are keenly aware that our sustainable development is intricately linked to the safety and security of our people. Trinidad and Tobago is located in a region that is affected not by armed conflict but by armed violence. Transnational organized crime and its global networks pose a daunting challenge to the security of States, especially small island developing States. In the Caribbean Community's crime and security strategy, transnational organized crime has been identified as an immediate significant threat. It attacks the functioning of State institutions, adds new vulnerabilities to governance and fosters instability. In doing so, it undermines the fundamental premises of our democracies — the rule of law, human rights and development.

Lasting peace can be achieved only if women become more involved in decision-making processes related to peacebuilding and post-conflict development. Accordingly, in recognition of the important contribution of women to peace and development, in 2010 Trinidad and Tobago introduced — and has since been the main sponsor of — resolution 65/69 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Trinidad and Tobago agrees that significant linkages between financing intended for both peacebuilding and development are important to achieving sustainable peace and development. We encourage the development of innovative financing mechanisms, which could go a long way to helping countries gain access to financing for peacebuilding and development.

Finally, my country calls on all members of the international community to renew their commitment to working with Member States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to assist the United Nations in fully realizing our commitment to building and sustaining peace.

Mr. Milanović (Serbia): I thank the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, for the initiative he has taken in organizing this important event. His endeavour is proof of his strong commitment to preventing conflicts and sustaining peace.

Serbia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (EU) (see A/72/PV.83). However, speaking in my national capacity, I shall now make a few additional points.

The consequences of the increasing number of conflicts and interconnected crises are far-reaching and fraught with social tensions and instability. They often result in threats and challenges that are increasingly complex and disruptive, and that become drivers of uncertainty for the future. Peace and security, development and human rights have always been at the core of the United Nations, but the complex nature of today's challenges calls for innovative approaches as we strive to find shared solutions. To that end, we must strengthen multilateralism and the role of the Organization, including by adapting its system to the needs of our time. Peacebuilding and sustaining peace are no exception.

Serbia welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707), which has been submitted pursuant to paragraph 30 of the twin resolutions of the General Assembly (resolution 70/262) and the Security Council (resolution 2282 (2016)) on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, based on the principle that peace must be pursued at all stages of conflict in a more efficient and effective way. As conflicts emerge in various parts of the world at the same time, while peacekeeping efforts are often overburdened and overstretched, the role of diplomacy in prevention, mediation and the peaceful resolution of conflicts has become more essential than ever before. The report and the relevant resolutions provide a solid basis for further strengthening our common endeavours.

Conflicts rarely emerge from nowhere, and their root causes are many and far-reaching. The links between such issues as dealing with poverty, political uncertainty, food and water shortages and inequalities are critical to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and should not be addressed in isolation. Peace can be attained only if the promise of the 2030 Agenda is met. In the words of the Secretary-General, the 2030 Agenda is the blueprint of the common vision of society towards which the world is trying to move.

We are well aware that growth and development must be sustainable and take into account protecting the environment, eradicating poverty, ensuring gender equality and stopping violence against women and girls. There can be no growth or development without peace and stability, just as no long-term peace or stability is achievable without growth, development and respect for human rights. Serbia's experience over the past two decades has shown that the gravitas of this paradigm is all too evident and important. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without peaceful and inclusive societies, the promotion of the rule of law at all levels, justice for all, and efficient and effective national and international institutions.

The importance of the regional and subregional perspective in addressing the issue of peacebuilding and sustaining peace cannot be stressed enough. Various international organizations have come to the Western Balkans for various purposes and at various times, engaging in promoting comprehensive processes that are essential to modern conflict resolution and peacebuilding. As a host country to a number of international and regional entities, Serbia understands and appreciates the need to work closely with key international and regional organizations to build new partnerships in a harmonious way.

In that context, I would like to reiterate what my country has said on numerous occasions. The presence of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) is of paramount importance for ensuring stability in Kosovo and Metohija and for creating conditions conducive to a lasting and sustainable solution to that question. Serbia also appreciates UNMIK's engagement in creating the conditions necessary for ensuring security, prosperity and respect for the human rights of all communities in those locations. The contributions of other international organizations operating under the auspices of the United Nations, such as the Kosovo Force, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the Kosovo mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as specialized United Nations agencies, is also invaluable and highly appreciated. Their continued presence, especially that of UNMIK, in the southernmost province of Serbia is indispensable for the overall security and stability of the region and for the implementation of the agreements reached within the EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina.

I would like to point out that the Serbian side in the dialogue has time and again confirmed its willingness to be constructive as well as its readiness to make compromises that are often difficult to achieve. It has contributed to seeking mutually acceptable solutions to the many complex issues. We have embarked on the process in the belief that the solution to all outstanding issues in a status-neutral framework will contribute to peace, stabilization and the realization of conditions for the unimpeded progress of the Western Balkans towards EU membership. Only through committed dialogue will it be possible to resolve all outstanding issues and build a stable region.

In conclusion, we are all aware that the challenges facing many parts of the world are numerous, that security is fractious and intractable and that we need continuous commitment and hard work to address these issues. At the same time, however, we must not be discouraged or deterred by the distances that we may be called on to traverse. Indeed, as Secretary-General Hammarskjöld once said, we must never measure the height of a mountain until we have reached the top, for it is only then that we will see how low it is. To ensure that we are all part of a United Nations that is fit for purpose, our deliberations must be conducted in a transparent and inclusive way, and our sights must be firmly trained on the prize of peace.

Mr. Gimolieca (Angola): We are honoured to take the floor at this timely and important meeting on the imperative of building and sustaining peace, and we commend the President of the General Assembly for convening it.

Angola aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.83).

I will begin by echoing the sentiment expressed by Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed at the Security Council open debate on peacekeeping operations, held on 29 August 2017 (see S/PV.8033). Implementing the sustaining peace agenda means putting Member States and their populations in the lead, giving priority to political solutions and prevention, and inclusively leveraging the United Nations three pillars — peace and security, human rights and development — in a mutually reinforcing way.

Prevention and peace processes must be rooted in national leadership and inclusive ownership, and they must be responsive to the needs and contributions of all segments of society, including women and young people, as agents of development and peace. The nature of today's challenges requires us to pool all our efforts in favour of peace and security, human rights and sustainable development. Accordingly, the fundamental role of women and young people in peacebuilding and sustaining peace has been highlighted in the twin resolutions on the review of the peacebuilding architecture adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 70/262) and the Security Council (resolution 2282 (2016)) on 27 April 2016. In this regard, I would like to emphasize the importance of the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/707), which provides an overview of progress made towards implementing these resolutions and the relevance of his ongoing reforms in the areas of peace and security, development and management. Furthermore, these landmark resolutions advanced the concept of sustaining peace in strengthening the coherence of the United Nations system in its provision of assistance to national Governments throughout every stage of conflict.

Angola supports the work of the Secretary-General with regard to the reform process. Achieving sustained peace and sustainable development will require that we embrace strong collective actions and enhanced collaboration and partnerships, including with the business community, financial institutions, civil society and regional and subregional organizations.

Following a long period of war and devastation affecting its social, economic and human fabric above all, Angola is now living in peace and is making a bold effort to fostering economic and social development, as well as deepening its democracy. We may consider that this is a success that should make all the nations in the world proud.

In conclusion, I would like to ask the following question: Does it make sense that at the very moment that we are discussing the building and maintenance of peace, we are also creating tensions in other parts of the world?

Mr. Gertze (Namibia): I have taken note of the President's reminder concerning the protocol for this meeting. I stand by it and will proceed directly with my statement.

Three years ago, we adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a global framework for sustainable development guided by international commitments for achieving global peace and prosperity. The first target of Sustainable Development Goal 16, on peace, justice and strong institutions calls for a significant reduction in all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere. Over the past two days, one speaker after another has expressed deep concern about the ongoing struggles to bring about a peaceful world, emphasizing the importance of prevention and highlighting the fact that peace is a precondition for development.

We seem to be on the same page as far as our aspirations for a world free of conflict are concerned. Yet news bulletins remind us daily that we are not meeting that target. Armed conflict and other forms of violence continue to see increased casualties among innocent civilians, including among our peacekeepers. I believe that we need to dramatically strengthen our collective efforts to refocus our attention on conflict prevention and on addressing the root causes of conflicts, sustainable development and human rights as a means to achieve peace. We must intensify our focus on conflict-prevention strategies.

We must foster the increased participation of women, young people and faith-based communities, including the private sector. We must mobilize adequate, predictable and sustainable funding. We must shift towards more inclusive policies that ensure more equal access to natural resources, basic services, security, justice, democracy and good governance. And we must invest in human resource development. These efforts will support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals for the benefit of all. There can be no sustainable development without peace, and there can be no peace without sustainable development. Let us take to heart the lesson contained in an ancient African proverb: when elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers.

Namibia has been independent for 28 years now. Since we are reminded daily about the dire conflicts and situations across the world, I would like to offer the Namibian example as a reason for hope. Yes, our country continues to face challenges, many of which are the direct consequences of the long war, violence and deprivation of the apartheid system under which our people lived for decades. However, as His Excellency Mr. Hage Geingob stated at his inauguration as the third President of Namibia, our people have developed a new narrative to overcome the hatred of the past.

Namibians have been determined to implement a policy of reconciliation that has not been without its trials but that has seen much success in bringing our people together. It has resulted in increased solidarity, cooperation and trust. A stable environment has provided fertile ground for the Government to implement its development agenda with a view to improving the quality of the lives of the Namibian people. As a result, success has already been seen in higher levels of services in such areas as education and the reduction in maternal and infant mortality rates and the number of deaths caused by HIV/AIDS, among other things. At the international level, Namibia supports peacebuilding through its participation in a number of peacekeeping missions and through its leadership in introducing resolution 1325 (2000) emphasizing the role of women in peace and security.

Those are the effects of peacebuilding that we have seen in Namibia, thanks to the assistance of the United Nations and other partners. Concerning the situation in the region, it is a fact that we continue to have some way to go in overcoming economic and political challenges, but let us remember how far we have come. We remain steadfast in our resolve to overcome those challenges and ensure that in our struggle to lift people from poverty and hunger through economic emancipation, no one is left behind.

It is in that context that Africa has put in place its development blue print, Agenda 2063, which depicts the Africa we want. To that end, in our collective efforts to put Africa on a sustainable path of peace, we have decided to silence the guns by 2020. In and of itself, this is a contribution to general disarmament. It is important to view disarmament not only in terms of nuclear and chemical weapons, but also of small arms and light weapons, which are leading to misery and undermining peace and stability in the global South. We urge the global community of nations to join us in this important initiative.

In conclusion, I want to convey a personal belief of Namibia's founding president and father of our nation, His Excellency Mr. Sam Nujoma, who reminded us that our common goals and objectives are achievable because a people united, striving to achieve a common good for all members of society, will always emerge victorious.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): I would like to begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, for organizing this important high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

The timing of this high-level meeting could not be more appropriate, in the light of the unprecedented challenges that the United Nations is facing in relation to the maintenance of international peace and security. All indications are that we are passing through a period characterized by growing geopolitical tensions among major Powers. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is becoming a major threat. Terrorism and violent extremism also remain a grave danger to international peace and security. Cybercrime and the possibility of disruption to critical infrastructure are nothing less than a nightmare. The spread of small arms and light weapons and the expanding activities of transnational organized criminals continue to foment instability around the world. Nevertheless, we are encouraged by the ongoing reform process that the Secretary-General is undertaking to make the Organization fit for purpose in responding to current security challenges.

In view of the enormous peace and security challenges that we are facing today, giving priority to conflict prevention is not a mere option; the concept of sustaining peace is also perfectly aligned with this important priority, and it has certainly brought about a new paradigm shift in the manner in which we should deal with peace and security issues. It is therefore encouraging to note that the proposed reform of the United Nations peace and security pillar has established prevention and sustaining peace as its overarching goal. In our view, this is important because it provides the necessary framework for coordinating a coherent response to root causes and violence in the various stages of conflict.

The President took the Chair.

We believe that the outcome of the reforms will enable the United Nations to develop an integrated capability to comprehensively tackle contemporary security challenges, among other things by minimizing duplicative structures and overlapping mandates, ensuring greater transparency and accountability, and improving planning and budgetary processes. We feel that this will ultimately strengthen the Organization's ability to deliver effective and efficient operational support in the field, including in complex security areas where peacekeeping and special political missions are deployed. That is why we welcome the latest report of the Secretary-General (A/72/707) on the review of the peacebuilding architecture and its recommendations.

It has been emphasized time and again that peace and security and development and human rights are inextricably linked, and that closer cooperation among various United Nations organs and other stakeholders is therefore required for building peaceful and inclusive societies. As the latest report clearly underscores, addressing institutional fragmentation and ensuring policy and operational coherence across the entire United Nations system are also absolutely essential to ensuring that conflict prevention and sustaining peace are placed at the heart of the Organization's work and activities.

However, we have to realize that we cannot achieve this end without making full use of the potential role of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), particularly its convening, bridging and advisory role in tandem with the principal and relevant organs of United Nations. We should therefore scale up the PBC's contribution along those lines, and our continuous focus and engagement are needed to ensure that the Commission promotes an integrated, strategic and coherent approach. In this regard, we are encouraged by the recent comprehensive advice that the PBC has provided to the Security Council on a number of regional and country-specific issues. We are also encouraged to note that the Secretary-General's reform proposal underscores the crucial role of the Peacebuilding Support Office in linking the peace and security pillar with development and humanitarian efforts.

We believe that the United Nations cannot address the myriad of international security challenges alone. In order to achieve the end goal of sustaining peace, there is a need to enhance partnerships with such various stakeholders as regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions, national Governments, civil society and private organizations across the spectrum of conflict cycles, which includes prevention, peacekeeping, special political missions, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. For instance, the peacebuilding efforts of the African Union (AU) in line with its implementation of the post-conflict reconstruction and development policy framework and the African Solidarity Initiative undoubtedly complement the work of the PBC. We hope that the joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security will be instrumental to further strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Africa. We also welcome the signing of the memorandum of understanding between the PBC and the Economic Community of West African

States, which provides a framework for cooperation and partnership in peacebuilding.

Ultimately, sustaining peace is, of course, a national endeavour, and the national ownership and inclusiveness of all stakeholders, including the Government, the private sector and civil society, are key to achieving the objective of sustaining peace. What is really required of the United Nations and international partners is help in building national and local capacities for sustaining peace. This has to be very well explained and understood by all so as to avoid any misunderstanding. Building the necessary confidence among Member States is absolutely crucial to facilitating the implementation and operationalization of the new approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Finally, we believe that there is a need for a change in mindset without which no number of structural adjustments or innovations can help us achieve the ultimate objective of making peace and security sustainable and avert what could otherwise be a calamity of immeasurable consequence. That should not be considered too difficult or complex to achieve, for a good start can be made by summoning our earlier commitment to multilateralism, without which the creation of the United Nations would have been inconceivable, and by reining in the short-sighted and undisciplined pursuit of national interest, which is central to the reasons for that creation and which the Second World War made a lesson to be ignored only at our peril. There is no doubt that this is a time when much wisdom is needed in relations among States.

Mr. López Lavado (Andorra) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this high-level meeting.

Two years ago, the Assembly and the Security Council adopted twin resolutions on the review of the peacekeeping architecture (resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), respectively). They emphasize the primary responsibility of States to promote peace and the importance of strengthening the Organization's work in preventing conflict.

Today we are witnessing a deterioration in the world's efforts to uphold the principles and values of the United Nations, and we therefore want to reiterate our commitment to peace and our support for multilateralism. The reforms proposed by the Secretary-General point the way to a more efficient and coherent Organization that is better adapted to the challenges facing the international community. We therefore express our support for his proposal (A/72/707) to focus his peace initiatives on improving prevention.

Andorra is one of the few places that has succeeded in maintaining peace for centuries. Our institutions have played a key role in consolidating lasting peace through a pact between those who had once waged war. That pact has indeed lasted, and it has been the basis of our history, in which our institutional architecture has cemented the unity of that instrument with a democratic and social rule of law. Despite our centuries-old tradition, we are aware that peace should never be taken for granted. We have a responsibility to support a culture that has peace as its purpose and foundation, with a commitment that must be nurtured, preserved and shared from a multifaceted and holistic perspective.

With regard to conflict prevention, education has been identified throughout this high-level meeting as a key ingredient in equipping children and young people with schooling and critical-thinking skills. Andorra is a country that has also made education one of its priorities, and specifically education for global citizenship. The promotion of a democratic culture that respects diversity, and of education for sustainable development and on human rights and gender equality, plays an essential role in forming attitudes and skills in our young people that promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts and thereby foster a culture of peace. The promotion of a culture of peace must also be accompanied by reform of the development system. Promoting sustainable development means, to a large degree, addressing the root causes of conflict. We therefore support the reforms proposed by the Secretary-General that seek greater efficiency and accountability of the United Nations development system, a new system that is capable of delivering greater results on the ground.

We share the view that peace means not only the absence of conflict but also the presence of the conditions and mechanisms necessary for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, such as sustainable development, prevention and respect for human rights. Andorra would like to join the international community in its efforts to promote, create and maintain the necessary conditions for sustainable peace.

Ms. Eckels-Currie (United States of America): I would like to thank you, President Lajčák, for convening this high-level meeting to demonstrate support for sustaining peace, the critical notion that peacebuilding goes before and beyond a conflict period and applies to all phases of conflict — before, during and after.

All parts of the United Nations system should be engaged in sustaining peace. We must recognize that peace is not the absence of conflict; it is not merely the silencing of the guns. Peace is built over time and often requires a wholesale reconstruction of the relationship between a Government and its citizens and among the citizens of a society emerging from or heading towards conflict. Peacekeeping missions alone cannot produce lasting peace. Missions can and should help create space for peace to take hold, but they must be part of a broader strategy. Most critically, Governments must also hold up their end of the deal. There can be no sustained long-term peace without political solutions and commitments on the ground, including to respecting and promoting fundamental human rights. If it is to realize peace, the United Nations must change how it does business. The United States strongly supports the Secretary-General's reform initiatives, which centre on the need for greater integration of all the parts of the United Nations system in order to ensure a more coherent, effective and efficient Organization.

We strongly support the Secretary-General's focus on conflict prevention. We must reorient the system to better head off conflict by addressing root causes before they lead to crisis. We support the Secretary-General's proposal to integrate the Peacebuilding Support Office into the Department of Political Affairs, an important structural change. We also encourage the Secretary-General to take action on his sustaining peace report (A/72/707), specifically including the creation of integrated strategic frameworks, United Nations development assistance frameworks and greater in-country cross-pillar cooperation. That is especially true with regard to human rights.

We also urge the Peacebuilding Support Office to serve as a more useful resource for Member States, by providing detailed best practices on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. However, we do not believe that throwing money at a conflict will result in peace. As a newer United Nations initiative still trying to prove itself, peacebuilding should be voluntarily funded and should not be tied to the peacekeeping budget. We should strengthen the operational ties between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The United States has advocated within the Security Council to include viable plans for the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding.

Liberia is a great example of the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission working closely together. The United Nations worked with the Government of Liberia and civil society to reach a plan that all parties could support. After almost 15 years of peacekeeping and successful presidential elections last year, the United Nations Mission in Liberia closed and the Liberian Government, in partnership with the United Nations country team, has taken the reins. That is a positive story for the United Nations to tell and it is a great model for it to use in future transitions. While every situation is different, the key ingredient to success is buy-in — by the host country, the security forces and judicial organs and the people in civil society, including women and youth leaders, human rights activists, experts in transitional justice and others. Peacebuilding helps bring everyone to the same table, and its convening power there presents an opportunity for all voices to be heard. Only when that happens can effective and lasting transitions to peace occur.

The United States is committed to the peacebuilding process and looks forward to working with all Member States to advance peace in our world.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Mr. President, for holding this important meeting on sustaining peace, with a view to finding a new approach to achieving peace and increasing our Organization's effectiveness so that it can keep up with the challenges of today's world. In that regard, we thank the Secretary-General for his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707).

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace require programmes and mechanisms on human rights, development and the rule of law. Peace is not just the absence of war; it requires the creation of conditions that will help to sustain it. The Kingdom of Bahrain welcomes the Secretary-General's vision for reforming the Organization, with an emphasis on linking the reform process to its three pillars of human rights, development, and peace and security, with a view to fulfilling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially where the role of women and youth in making and building peace is concerned. That vision requires strengthening all United Nations organs and entities and intensifying their efforts, by mainstreaming best practices and facilitating their mechanisms and their culture of work, with the aim of ensuring that the Organization can improve its effectiveness and its ability to face challenges, thereby fulfilling the comprehensive vision of Member States for an Organization founded on the pillar of peace and security.

Under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa, His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, our Prime Minister, and His Royal Highness Prince Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, the Kingdom of Bahrain has emphasized a principled approach to promoting partnership and cooperation with all United Nations organs and bodies, because we believe in the role that our Organization has to play in bringing about a more stable and prosperous world.

In his address to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session (see A/72/PV.20), His Excellency Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, underscored the Kingdom's firm belief that establishing stability and security in the Middle East and the entire world requires a shared political will, as well as a serious collective effort by all to ensure respect for the basic principles underlying relations among States, such as good-neighbourliness, non-interference in the internal affairs of others and compliance with international conventions and instruments, so that together we can address terrorism, the greatest challenge facing us, and deter States, individuals and entities from supporting and financing it. That is especially important now because terrorism is no longer limited to terrorist organizations that we can confront and eliminate. Rather, it has become a tool in the hands of States determined to provoke crises in other countries in their pursuit of their own agenda. They have consequently become fully complicit partners in the commission of terrorist acts and a destabilizing factor for international peace and security.

Given the strategic importance of peace and security in our region, the Kingdom of Bahrain has established strategic partnerships with its allies and neighbours in order to preserve the security of the region, combat terrorism and protect international navigation and commerce routes.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain will continue to work with the international community and the United Nations to promote peace and security and thereby achieve sustainable development, with a view to benefiting the world and future generations.

Mr. Khiari (Tunisia): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this high-level meeting on building and sustaining peace. Today's challenging international conflicts, as well as the growing number of conflicts within and between States, call on us to draw lessons from our experiences, take stock of the measures we have undertaken and put prevention at the core of the mandate of the United Nations system.

As the Secretary-General pointed out in his opening remarks (see A/72/PV.83), more must be invested in prevention. The $233 billion that countries have spent on humanitarian interventions, peacekeeping and hosting refugees should be redirected to strengthening early-warning mechanisms and championing regional and national leadership so as to foster resilience in societies. In that regard, we believe it is important to highlight five points that we consider key to effectively promoting and sustaining peace throughout the United Nation system.

First, as a number of speakers have highlighted, sustaining peace is a component of the three pillars of the United Nations work — security, human rights and development. In that regard, we believe that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an asset to all Member States, and we should consequently spare no effort in supporting the Organization's ability to implement it comprehensively, providing and devoting every possible means towards that end. It is hardly necessary to recall here that poverty, social exclusion and systemic inequalities fuel the recurrence of conflicts.

Secondly, we believe that promoting community-led initiatives aimed at strengthening social cohesion and finding grassroots-generated solutions to local grievances continues to be of paramount importance. The Secretary-General tied that notion to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically Sustainable Development Goal 16, and reaffirmed that promoting social cohesion, so that diversity is seen as a benefit rather than a threat, is an investment in sustaining peace. As societies become more multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious, people must feel that their identities are valued even as they feel a sense of belonging to the larger community. Communities and grassroots organizations are the best places to bring their needs to the fore and debate possible avenues to address them.

Thirdly, promoting sustaining peace is strongly linked to the leverage given to the role of women in addressing the root causes of conflict. We should opt to vigorously enhance their leadership at various levels and in various contexts. In that regard, we commend the 50 per cent increase in Peacebuilding Fund expenditures on programmes targeting women's impact on the ground. It is indeed pivotal to encourage their meaningful participation in the mediation process, as has already been said in Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, and in other General Assembly resolutions on mediation.

Fourthly, the Secretary-General sets out in his report (A/72/707) on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, options to increase, restructure and better prioritize financing for peacebuilding. The report identifies possibilities for innovative financing, including through cost savings based on budgetary partnerships between peacekeeping operations and the private sector. As Member States, we should carefully consider the various options proposed by the Secretary-General for a sustained and predictable response to conflicts.

Fifthly, as highlighted in the joint United Nations and World Bank report *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, a scaled-up system for preventive action could save between $20 billion and $70 billion per year. A focus on prevention should therefore be our priority and ultimate objective.

In conclusion, it is our duty to ensure, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the mandate of the 2030 Agenda, that prevention cuts across all the pillars of the work of the United Nations, so that we can work effectively to bring about lasting peace.

Mrs. Ighil (Algeria): I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting, which constitutes a crucial milestone in our common endeavour for peace. I also want to thank the Secretary-General for his insightful report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707), which demonstrates his steadfast and strong commitment to conflict prevention. We support his efforts aimed at placing conflict prevention at the heart of the United Nations peace and security agenda through his proposed mutually reinforcing reforms.

The adoption by the General Assembly and the Security Council of the landmark twin resolutions on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture (resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), respectively) was certainly a turning point for the United Nations approach to conflict prevention, affirming the Organization's commitment to sustaining peace as an overarching goal and a process for addressing the persistent challenges of conflict and laying the foundation for durable solutions. In addressing the complexity of modern conflicts, we must recognize the importance of conflict prevention, early warning and preventive diplomacy by promoting a paradigm shift towards a holistic approach that gives priority to political solutions rather than managing conflicts once they break out, thereby underpinning the concept that sustaining peace encompasses all cycles of conflict and is the key to long-term stable and durable peace. To ensure the success of our collective peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts, we believe that the following elements are essential.

First, we must promote broad and inclusive national ownership and leadership, bearing in mind the specificities of each situation and country beyond a one-size-fits-all approach. Secondly, there is a need to overcome the current fragmentation of United Nations activities by bridging its work across its three pillars through a more coherent and sustained approach by the main United Nations intergovernmental organs, each from the vantage point of their responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations. Thirdly, we must address the nexus between security and development in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Fourthly, more women and young people must become involved in conflict-prevention initiatives. In this regard, we welcome the creation of the African Union's pan-African network of women mediators, FemWise-Africa, which held its first Assembly in Algeria in December. Fifthly, predictable, sustainable and better-prioritized funding should be ensured in order to back up sustaining peace and conflict-prevention activities. Sixthly, United Nations partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, especially the African Union (AU), should be strengthened by promoting better coordination and interaction between United Nations and AU envoys, focusing on capacity-building and addressing the root causes and socioeconomic factors conducive to terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism.

In its active efforts to help to stabilize its immediate neighbourhood, Algeria endeavours to promote prevention and peaceful means for conflict resolution at both the regional and the international levels, by advocating for political solutions, mediation, inclusive dialogue and national reconciliation, in full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the unity and cohesion of peoples. We also continue to work to foster the peaceful resolution of conflict in Africa and advance African solutions for African problems.

After emerging from a national tragedy during the 1990s and winning its battle against terrorism, Algeria is trying to create the conditions necessary for stability and development and to address the root causes of conflict. Our civil concord policy and national reconciliation process initiated by His Excellency President Abdelaziz Bouteflika have significantly contributed to restoring peace and stability to the country. Algeria is currently implementing a preventive approach aimed at building a resilient and stable society. Deradicalization and the fight against violent extremism are key to achieving that objective. Our policy of deradicalization encompasses political, economic, social, educational, religious and cultural aspects. It is mainly focused on addressing all factors related to marginalization and exclusion and on promoting national reconciliation, democracy, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as social justice and equality of opportunity, women's empowerment, education and job opportunities for young people.

Finally, it is important to highlight that our deliberations on sustaining peace should be State-driven and conducted in a transparent and inclusive manner. Sustaining peace is first and foremost a responsibility of Member States, as the Secretary-General rightly pointed out in his report.

Mr. Rybakov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): We are truly grateful to you, Mr. President, for convening today's high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. When it was being planned, no one could have imagined the international context that we would be holding it in today.

Today we are all once again solemnly affirming our commitment to sustaining peace. But all around us unprecedented conflicts are evolving, accompanied by direct military aggression, provocations on a national scale, threats and bellicose rhetoric. Hundreds of thousands of people are being made to suffer because of the aggressive geopolitical ambitions of certain States. The world has effectively been sliding into a new cold war and is on the brink of the threatened use of weapons of mass destruction. According to certain specific formal indicators, a third world war is not merely possible but is already under way. Politics and military technologies today are such that war does not always take the form of mass battles involving tanks, armies, artillery, aviation and navies. According to some assessments, at least a third of all States today are in one way or another involved in combat operations, which is more than the number of States that participated in the Second World War.

We all recently witnessed events in Syria that constituted a blatant act of aggression against a sovereign State when a massive rocket strike was launched on Damascus, based on unproven allegations and bypassing the Security Council. That was also how the war in Iraq began in its time, and to this day someone is probably still searching for weapons of mass destruction there. The people of Syria have become hostages to this confrontation, and while for all intents and purposes the Islamic State has been defeated, there is no end in sight for the war.

The degree of confrontation between the most powerful States in the world has now reached a critical point. Accusations of the use of chemical weapons, manipulations and falsehoods at the highest international level, the spread of fake news, the unabashed persecution of uncooperative countries, sanctions and counter-sanctions — all of these have taken the situation to the point of absurdity. For some State leaders, war has become a method of political self-assertion. And this is all taking place against a backdrop of an utter crisis in diplomacy and in the United Nations, which is the main international organization called on to prevent and end international conflicts. In our view, among other things super-Power status implies and imposes a super-responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Otherwise the super-Power risks becoming a barbarian armed with a modern tomahawk.

Belarus has always adhered to the principles of a peaceful, non-confrontational policy in international relations. We are not only actively involved in implementing peace initiatives in our region, Eastern Europe, we are also donors to the cause of regional stability and security. As long ago as 2015, President Alyaksandr Lukashenko of the Republic of Belarus, speaking at the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventieth session (see A/70/PV.15), suggested that we needed to hold a new, wide-ranging discussion on the principles for States' coexistence in the future and on the fact that our peoples' well-being and development are inextricably linked to the issues of ensuring universal peace and security. Implementing Belarus's initiative to recreate a comprehensive process to guide relations between East and West, similar to the Helsinki process, could give us all a chance at a future of geopolitical calm, peace and security.

A true struggle for peace — but a struggle, not a war — is particularly significant today. The political ineptitude of some State actors, alongside the extremist groups cloaking themselves in religion, against a global backdrop of accumulating weapons of mass destruction and increasingly primitive terrorist attacks that no longer require elaborate preparation or major financing — all of this is turning the whole world into a potential theatre of war. Responsible civilized States should not support conflicts, nor should they create new flashpoints of conflict or engage in wars of sanctions. They should learn once again to talk to one another, come to agreements, show political will, set their ambitions aside and unite in the name of universal peace and prosperity. Sustaining peace is in the hands of States themselves. Our common future depends exclusively on the good-faith efforts of every country.

Mr. Mounzer (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country's delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.83).

The establishment of the United Nations gave the peoples of the world, who are cited at the beginning of the Charter, new hope for the possibility that the Organization could shoulder its principal responsibilities for maintaining international peace and security, sparing humankind the ravages and horrors of war, committing to peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and preventing conflicts and address their root causes, with emphasis on the primary responsibility of national Governments for setting priorities, strategies and activities aimed at ensuring sustained peace.

The Syrian Arab Republic believes that in order to achieve peacebuilding and sustaining peace in our world today we must emphasize the following points.

First, there must be respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which stress the importance of upholding the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every country, as well as non-interference in their internal affairs. The question here is: How can all those important provisions be implemented while some States Members of the Organization ignore the Charter and the principles of international law?

Secondly, the sovereignty and independence of States must be maintained, and greedy countries must stop intervening in the internal affairs of other countries and attempting to change the ruling regimes by force through incitement and fuelling internal strife. The question here is: Have foreign interventions and external conspiracies established peace in many countries of the world or have they instead propelled those countries into a raging state of war, in which terrorists and mercenaries have sown the seeds of chaos and where people have been forced into displacement and migration?

Thirdly, foreign occupation, the main barrier to peacebuilding and sustaining peace anywhere in the world, must be ended. Foreign occupation is a threat to peace and security not just in the region where it occurs, but also to global peace and security. The question here is: How can we build sustained and comprehensive peace in our region when Arab territories have been occupied by Israel for decades and when the occupier has refused to withdraw from these lands, return them to their legitimate owners, or implement hundreds of international resolutions adopted by the United Nations, aimed at ending Israel's occupation of Arab territories — in which it carries out all kinds of violations and aggression against the people of the occupied territories, in addition to its direct aggression against my country, Syria — and requiring its immediate withdrawal?

Fourthly, the unilateral economic sanctions imposed by some States as a way of putting economic and political pressure on others must be lifted. They are a blatant violation of international law and of the principles of sovereignty and sovereign equality.

Fifthly, terrorism must be fought and the countries supporting it must be stopped from investing in it. Wherever it occurs, terrorism blocks any opportunity for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Moreover, terrorism is a cross-border and cross-continent phenomenon that cannot be prevented from expanding unless it is opposed and uprooted at the international level. This calls for the assertion that no effort to counter terrorism can succeed if it goes against the purposes of the Charter and the principles of international law, and without prior coordination and full cooperation with the Governments of relevant countries.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Turkish regime claimed from this rostrum the day before yesterday (see A/72/PV.83) that States must interfere to prevent conflicts and that if conflicts erupt, States must interfere to end them. What the Turkish Minister said is the ultimate hypocrisy, because his Government, together with those of other countries both inside and outside the region, has been the main driver of terrorism in Syria for more than seven years. It has opened its borders to terrorists from all over the world. It has established training centres for them on its territories and given them every kind of support for killing Syrians. It was the first to facilitate terrorist organizations' access to poisonous chemical materials within Syria so that they can commit crimes against Syrian civilians and soldiers.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Monsignor Grysa (Holy See): Peacebuilding is one of the most important activities of the United Nations and therefore deserves the full attention of the international community. The Holy See would like to underline five priorities for peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

First, the United Nations can and should recommit to its peacebuilding efforts and to scaling them up, including by ensuring the unified delivery of action across the board, developing effective transition and exit strategies, conducting continuing analysis, promoting stronger synergies and coherence and constantly adjusting its responses.

Secondly, as an integral part of preventive diplomacy, the international community should focus on institutional capacity-building in States where there are situations of potential or impending conflict, a step that is also key to safeguarding successful transitions from conflict to lasting peace.

Thirdly, to build sustained peace, illicit flows and accumulations of weapons must be firmly addressed. Ending the arms trafficking and illicit financing that directly or indirectly contribute to corruption and to the commission of atrocity crimes is an essential element in sustaining peace.

Fourthly, inclusivity is a crucial aspect of sustainable peace. Conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding processes and efforts should involve all sectors of society. Women should play an active role across the whole spectrum of conflict prevention and resolution, as well as post-conflict peacebuilding.

Lastly, the success of the transition from conflict to building and sustaining peace demands that we seriously address issues of justice and accountability. Justice and legal accountability are essential vectors for reconciliation, not its opposite. Failure to ensure justice and put an end to impunity can sabotage post-conflict peacebuilding efforts and eventually rekindle conflicts, thereby arresting development and violating human rights.

My delegation would like to express its appreciation for the accomplishments of United Nations missions in preventing or ending conflicts afflicting many parts of the world, thereby greatly contributing to building the sustainable peace and stability that enable development and respect for human rights to flourish. The Holy See reiterates its commitment to collaborating wherever possible in the work of conflict prevention and resolution and of building sustainable peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): I thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this important meeting, and the Secretary-General for his report (A/72/707) pursuant to the 2016 resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (resolutions 70/262 and 2262 (2016), respectively).

Some may wonder what the representative of a nation that has not experienced a day of genuine peace in decades, and that has endured one of the most protracted conflicts and the longest occupation in modern history, could have to say about sustaining peace. But our position is based on that very experience, because, having been deprived of it for so long, we know how invaluable peace truly is and how fundamental to all aspects of life.

The efforts and means needed to prevent conflicts are infinitely fewer than those needed to resolve a conflict once it has erupted, with all its immediate and long-term effects. We can therefore only agree with the vision of the Secretary-General, which places prevention at its heart.

The attention span of the international community has proved increasingly hard to sustain. There are too many crises, too many cold conflicts and too many violent conflicts, so we address the most urgent of them instead of adopting a more holistic and strategic approach. Diplomacy cannot just follow the news cycle; it must be able to assess early warning and engage and address situations before they make it into the news, and long after they have disappeared from television screens.

Peacebuilding, human rights and development are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Failure to act on one deeply affects the others. Accordingly, consistent and sustained efforts are needed on all three fronts, including by addressing the root causes of conflicts, upholding international law, ensuring accountability and reinforcing multilateral mechanisms and responses. Such efforts must be inclusive and involve the United Nations, intergovernmental bodies, Governments and civil-society organizations. Moreover, they can only gain from the involvement of women, with their important perspective and their ability to contribute to peace efforts, and of young people, who have a right to build their world and whose energy can change the present and shape the future.

In the absence of peace, the Palestinian people continue to be denied their rights and to suffer an acute crisis of protection and accountability, as well as a crisis arising from a failure of multilateralism. Palestine suffers from double standards, from an à la carte approach to the implementation of Security Council resolutions and from Israel's exemption, which for decades has allowed it to escape accountability for its systematic breach of those resolutions. The lack of enforcement of the long-standing international consensus enshrined in the United Nations resolutions on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and a just peace has allowed Israel to entrench its occupation instead of ending it. Our tragedy has proven over and over again that impunity is the enemy of peace. It undermines the credibility and authority of the international system, born of the horrors of two world wars and designed to prevent their recurrence and to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, but which has failed to do so.

We must revive and recommit to the ideals underpinning our international system, and uphold the law so that we may all know sustainable peace. Peace is the noblest cause and the most powerful, positive change agent. We have a duty to achieve and preserve it across the globe, and Palestine pledges to play its part in that endeavour, in our region and beyond.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Mr. Caroni (Inter-Parliamentary Union): When Colombia's President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, who spoke here on Tuesday (see A/72/PV.83), received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2016, he said in his acceptance speech,

> "That is the great paradox I have found: while many who have not suffered the conflict in their own flesh are reluctant to accept peace, the victims are the ones who are most willing to forgive".

What we learn from that is that it is important to listen to the victims and their ability to reconcile, because without dialogue between current and former antagonists, reconciliation remains impossible, as does sustaining peace.

But of course antagonism and diverging interests are inevitable in any society, which is why it is so important to have platforms to address such divergences constructively and, if possible, with a view to finding a compromise, and without violence, needless to say. At the national level, the most prominent and influential platforms for such dialogue are usually parliaments. For that reason, I can hardly imagine a better ally for the United Nations sustaining peace agenda than parliaments.

But as the United Nations moves forward in reorganizing itself to better prevent conflicts around the world, parliaments and parliamentarians are often missing from key United Nations debates and reports. This high-level meeting is a noteworthy exception, and the thanks of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) go to you, Mr. President, for your kind invitation. However, it often seems that such debates are more focused on partnerships with civil society or the private sector, despite the fact that parliaments are the central institution through which the will of the people is, or ideally should be, expressed. Parliaments have a key role to play in sustaining peace, be it helping to prevent conflicts or contributing to reconciliation in post-conflict situations.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union was itself founded to promote dialogue and the peaceful resolution of conflict. Sustaining peace within the IPU falls under the mandate of its Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, which prepared a resolution on sustaining peace as a vehicle for achieving sustainable development. The resolution, which was facilitated by two rapporteurs, Mexico's Senator Rojas Hernández and myself, from Switzerland, was adopted unanimously by the IPU Assembly in March. It is a good illustration of what parliaments can do to help achieve the sustaining peace agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The resolution highlights the importance of national ownership and the need for inclusivity in peacebuilding and development. It therefore calls for greater partnerships and a meaningful involvement of parliaments in the implementation process, since they guarantee inclusive decision-making processes, sponsor active dialogues within communities and work with civil society to oversee political processes. In parallel, the resolution calls on parliaments to make use of their relevant lawmaking, oversight, budgetary, representative and electoral functions to facilitate the adoption of enabling legislation, including key budget laws, and to monitor and ensure the efficient implementation of the sustaining peace and development agendas.

The IPU, in its own right, also supports peacebuilding, while helping parliaments to mature into more democratic and robust institutions. The IPU makes use of parliamentary diplomacy as well. To that end, the IPU offers its good offices and provides a neutral venue for members of parliament to exchange views and experiences and discuss conflicts within and between countries. Moreover, the IPU assists parliaments in dealing with various threats to security and taking action on counter-terrorism and disarmament. It does so by raising awareness and encouraging an exchange of views among parliamentarians and by providing technical assistance to strengthen the different capacities of parliaments.

In my view, at its core, sustaining peace is about inclusiveness. Who would be better suited than parliaments to provide it, given that parliaments are the forums where the different needs of society are, or at least should be, addressed?

In conclusion, we believe that parliaments have a lot to offer when it comes to sustaining peace. I therefore ask all the relevant sustaining peace actors — at the national, regional and global levels — to keep parliaments in mind. In turn, I can promise that we parliamentarians will keep all the other actors in mind too. Together, we can move forward.

The President: I now call on the observer of the University for Peace.

Mr. Rojas-Aravena (University for Peace) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting.

New and old threats have become intertwined in the dynamics of conflicts. Such conflicts have increasing costs, while fewer and fewer resources are allocated to the sustainability of peace. Conflicts and complex crises require better analysis, forging shared viewpoints and anticipatory actions, which provide better opportunities for prevention, as highlighted by Secretary-General António Guterres and our documents related to peacebuilding and sustainability. In the current context of global interdependence, it is necessary to visualize and establish operational platforms so that the mutually reinforcing link between peace and security, development and human rights can be transformed into specific actions that contribute to the de-escalation of domestic, regional and international tensions.

Education, accompanied by multilateralism, constitutes the key tool for confronting those tensions. In a society divided by and caught up in conflict, education for peace is required. That means education for non-violence, inclusion, social cohesion, the rule of law, legality and ethics — in short, education for sustainable peace and prevention. It is essential to provide education that promotes skills, values and behaviours that contribute to peace, justice, sustainable development, democracy, human rights, solidarity and the protection of the planet.

Without a new generation that has the value of peace in its hearts and minds, societies will be condemned to repeat past cycles of conflict and violence. Without peace there is no possibility of exercising our rights. Without peace, human rights are profoundly violated. There is no development in the absence of peace. Without development there is no growth or prosperity, which creates more poverty, more inequality and more tension. Ultimately, it exacerbates and compounds crises, violence and conflicts. Building sustainable peace is essential. Multilateralism is dialogue for peace.

Achieving the sustainability of peace requires prevention. It requires the development of new leadership and holistic educational policies on the different trends that mark conflicts and complex crises. Prevention must address the root causes of conflict and violence and understand their consequences.

We at the United Nations University for Peace anticipate that complex intranational crises will become more serious and will become the fundamental factor of conflict in the future, as they are connected to global crises such as climate change. We need to provide broad and efficient education on prevention in order to achieve the Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The University for Peace puts the pillars of the United Nations at the centre. In that context, it highlights the importance of women and young people in conflict prevention, reconciliation and post-conflict situations. The University for Peace develops education on prevention. It reaffirms its commitment to such tasks in its master's, doctorate and training courses, as well as its publications. The University for Peace is educating and training leaders for prevention, mediation and the transformation and resolution of conflict and post-conflict situations in order to achieve a future with sustainable peace. If we want peace, let us work for peace.

The President: I now call on the observer of the International Development Law Organization.

Mr. Civili (International Development Law Organization): As the world's only intergovernmental organization devoted exclusively to advancing the rule of law and access to justice, the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) welcomes this opportunity to contribute to this high-level meeting.

Access to justice and the rule of law lie at the heart of inclusive and sustainable development. They are also critical to building and sustaining peace. Many root causes and drivers of conflict, such as discrimination and exclusion, unequal distribution of public goods and natural resources, human rights violations, corruption and lack of accountability, issue from or are exacerbated by the absence of the rule of law.

For peace to take hold, people must have confidence in justice institutions. By promoting equality and access to justice, protecting the vulnerable, ensuring equitable access to resources and services, providing the means for fair and transparent adjudication of disputes, encouraging peaceful collaboration and punishing violence, the rule of law helps to build stability, resilience and public confidence in constitutional processes, and to strengthen trusts in laws and institutions. The rule of law serves to encourage an environment conducive to trade, investment and economic growth that generates jobs, which, especially when targeted to unemployed young people, can reduce the risk of social unrest and violence.

The value of the rule of law to peacebuilding and sustaining peace is evident. Its implementation, however, is fraught with many challenges. That makes this high-level meeting and the proposals of the Secretary-General all the more vital.

IDLO works in fragile and conflict-affected countries in every region in the world. Based on that experience, I would like to make four key points.

First, meaningful and sustainable justice-sector reforms are possible only when they are nationally led and owned, tailored to the specific context and inclusive in approach. Our work, and that of other organizations, shows that community-level engagement and the participation of marginalized groups, such as women, youth and historically excluded minorities, helps a great deal in building mutual trust and confidence.

Secondly, like other aspects of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, rule-of-law initiatives benefit when they are both top-down and bottom-up. That means supporting capacity development for institutional and legal reforms, on the one hand, and the legal empowerment of justice seekers, on the other. Legal empowerment not only enhances access to justice, but also contributes to building trust and confidence in fragile and conflict-affected situations.

Thirdly, justice-sector reforms require greater and more sustained investment. Short funding cycles and unrealistic time frames not only fail to achieve targets, they risk creating a perverse negative impact by alienating stakeholders when they fail to deliver what they promise. IDLO welcomes the Secretary-General's emphasis on sustained efforts and adequate resources for peacebuilding.

Finally, as the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/707) notes, restructuring global peace and development efforts calls for the active involvement of a wide range of international, regional and national actors. IDLO has partnered successfully with United Nations political missions and development programmes in some of the most fragile and conflict-affected countries. We look forward to further deepening and broadening our collaboration with the United Nations system and Member States to build and sustain peace.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in this high-level meeting.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/72/L.49, entitled "Follow-up to the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/72/L.49?

Draft resolution A/72/L.49 was adopted (resolution 72/276).

The President: I would like to express my sincere thanks to His Excellency Mr. Masud Bin Momen, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh, and Her Excellency Ms. Audra Plepytė, Permanent Representative of Lithuania, who ably and patiently conducted the discussions and complex negotiations in the informal consultations on resolution 72/276. I am sure that the members of the Assembly join me in extending to them our sincere appreciation.

I would like to start my concluding remarks with a simple message: I sincerely thank members. Whether delegations travelled from abroad or were already in New York, participated directly or worked behind the scenes, they have all shown their commitment to sustaining peace, and, because of them, this high-level meeting was a success.

First, we increased visibility and awareness. As I said on Tuesday (see A/72/PV.83), this meeting has attracted the highest levels of attendance seen at the United Nations this year.

Secondly, we followed up on our promises. We made sure that the 2016 resolutions on sustaining peace (resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)) were not one-off measures but the start of a new approach to peace. The resolution we have just adopted, and my Chair's summary, will drive this process forward.

Thirdly, we have gained more understanding, more lessons learned and more ideas for the future. Let me mention them in more detail.

First, with regard to our understanding of peace, we have talked a lot over the past two days about how we see and understand peace. We said that peace is more than a ceasefire; it is more than a peace deal; and it is more than the absence of war. That means that one-off operations or activities are not enough to achieve it. Instead, we need to tackle conflict at its roots. We need to look to the horizon to see the warning signs. We need to build a culture of peace and a culture of prevention.

Sustaining peace is not an easy task. I think that was highlighted by the President of Colombia, who said that it is more difficult to build peace than to silence the guns (see A/72/PV.83). However, it is not a task we are shying away from. Instead, we are stepping up to take it on.

A second achievement came through the lessons we learned, and I will mention four areas in particular.

First, with regard to prevention, our discussions showed that prevention is not an abstract concept. It has happened; it is happening; and it can happen again. Many participants shared their experiences with mediation and diplomacy. For example, we heard about how mediation helped Montenegro to remain stable and peaceful at a time of regional instability. We also talked about longer-term prevention, which turned our focus to sustainable development, economic growth, institution-building and respect for human rights. It is clear that we are beginning to view those areas through a lens of prevention. That is why successful poverty reduction in Peru was held up as a contribution to sustaining peace.

Secondly, with regard to coherence, we learned that a more coherent approach is already evident at both national and international levels — in the Gambia, for example, where sustaining peace is central to the country's national development plan; or in Malawi, where United Nations development and political actors came together to support the national peace architecture; or in New York, where the Peacebuilding Commission is building bridges across the three pillars of the United Nations.

Thirdly, with regard to national ownership, we were all on the same page. We agreed that sustaining peace does not stand a chance unless it is driven by national actors. Lessons from the Philippines showed us the need to complement rather than replace national cultures, sensitivities and policies. And we were reminded that national ownership made sustaining peace a reality in Côte d'Ivoire.

Finally, the message of "inclusion, inclusion, inclusion" could not have been clearer. When we widen the space — when we pull more chairs up to the table — we see the results. One example mentioned pertained to women in Liberia. When women have had a platform and a voice, they have used it to prevent the country from sliding back into war. Young people in the Balkans were another example mentioned. Even years after conflict, they continue to work for reconciliation. We also heard about religious leaders in Afghanistan who have used their influence to advocate for peace. And we learned that civil society in Sri Lanka had helped to design the national reconciliation process.

Sustaining peace cannot be limited to this Hall. We need to open our doors wider, and that includes the private sector. As we heard in a video message from Sir Richard Branson, businesses must play a greater role in making our planet more peaceful.

A third major achievement of this meeting came through our ideas for the future. We reviewed our toolbox and we chose many tools, which we can use more frequently and more efficiently going forward, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, for example. The Secretary-General called it the common blueprint for more peaceful, stable, resilient groups of societies. However, we need to do more to fully grasp its preventive potential.

Peace operations are another example. In that regard, I want to repeat the call, made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, to look closer at how such operations can better support sustaining peace or inclusion, because that can be both an aim and a tool. We can act on the recommendations of the recent progress study on youth, peace and security. We can pay more attention to the gender aspects of other tools for sustaining peace, including conflict analysis. Regional organizations also have their own toolboxes. The United Nations must learn from those and support them.

Finally, when we talk about tools for the future, we cannot ignore financing. Many speakers drew attention to the proposals outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/707). They urged us to consider them seriously. Others spoke up loudly in support of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund. Our interactive discussions also generated some exciting ideas about financing for sustaining peace. That is only a fraction of our wider toolbox. I hope to capture more in my summary.

This was a successful high-level meeting. But we cannot speak only about success. The realities of peace for many people on the ground are too horrific and the signs that things could get even worse are all too clear. There are challenges and concerns. It is up to all of us to act in response, not only those of us who live with conflict, who have a vested economic or social interest or who have the time or the money, but every single one of us.

Our shared responsibility is clear. In fact, it is the basis of the Charter of the United Nations. In the words of the President of Ireland, it is a most profound political and moral responsibility not only to the citizens of our own nations but to the peoples of other nations. We all signed up to it. That is why sustaining peace rests on all our shoulders, why we all have an interest in achieving it and why we all stand to lose if we decide to go down a more dangerous path alone. We must embrace our political and moral responsibility. We must keep the promises that we made in 2016. We must bring sustaining peace out of this Hall to the people on the ground.

I would like to inform Member States that in due course I will circulate a summary of the proceedings of the plenary meeting and the interactive dialogues held during the high-level meeting.

Several delegations have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I would like to remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Sahraei (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am taking the floor to exercise my right of reply in response to the unfounded remarks made about my country by the representatives of Saudi Arabia (see A/72/PV.86) and Yemen (see A/72/PV.85).

I would like to note that Saudi Arabia's military acquisitions and intervention in Yemen represent the main underlying reason for the escalation of the crisis and for the human tragedy in that country. In such a situation, the claim that Iran intervenes in the internal affairs of Yemen is a naive and false scenario aimed at deflecting the attention of the international community from the war crimes committed by the Saudi-led coalition against the innocent Yemeni people.

We are of the view that the crisis in Yemen has no military solution. It can be resolved only through a ceasefire and inclusion. As you, Mr. President, rightly said in your closing statement, inclusion, with the participation of all Yemeni parties and groups, is a prerequisite for the peaceful settlement of the conflict in Yemen. Iran's fundamental policy is based on the peaceful settlement of conflict and the establishment of stability and security in the region. In line with that policy, in his statement in this Hall on the first day of the general debate, the Iranian Foreign Minister urged the countries of the Persian Gulf to join an initiative to set up a dialogue for regional cooperation (see A/72/PV.83). My delegation would like to once again reiterate the importance of that initiative as a valuable means to advance long-lasting stability in Yemen and other parts of the region.

With regard to the correct name of the body of water between Iran and the Arabian Peninsula, I should remind the representative of Saudi Arabia that the traditional term "Persian Gulf" has been the correct appellation for that body of water since about 500 B.C., and it will remain so forever. It is a standard geographical term, recognized by the international community, including the United Nations, and should not be tinkered with because of the political projects and day-to-day wishes of this or that ruler.

Mrs. Koçyiğit Grba (Turkey): The Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs made a statement on behalf of our country on peacebuilding and sustaining peace during the initial segment of the high-level meeting (see A/72/PV.83). I have asked for the floor in exercise of the right of reply.

I reject the statement by the representative of the Syrian regime in its entirety. As usual, it contains only distorted facts and baseless accusations against my country. The regime, which long ago lost its legitimacy, is ruthlessly massacring its own people by employing all imaginable instruments of force and violence. Those actions represent war crimes and crimes against humanity. We are appalled that such a regime, which has the blood of innocent people on its hands, can dare to take the floor in the context of a meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Eventually, those responsible for the destruction of Syria and the suffering of the Syrian people will be held accountable for their crimes. Until then, Turkey will continue to stand by the democratic aspirations of the Syrian people.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Our delegation would like to exercise its right of reply with regard to what was mentioned by the representative of the Turkish regime.

The Turkish regime has exploited Turkey's full capacities, in cooperation with other States and regimes inside and outside our region, in order to support terrorist organizations, in particular Da'esh, the Al-Nusra Front and other terrorist organizations affiliated with them. In fact, the Turkish regime opened Turkey's borders to terrorists and established training centres for them on Turkish territory, assisting them with training in the use of toxic chemical weapons. The Turkish regime also facilitated the entry of all kinds of weapons, including toxic chemicals, to Syrian territory so that those terrorist groups could use them against civilians in Syria.

The Turkish regime continues to support, finance and arm the terrorists on Syrian territories. I would like to mention a book entitled *ISIS Defectors: Inside Stories of the Terrorist Caliphate*, by Ahmet Yayla, who headed the counter-terrorism division in Sanliurfa, Turkey, between 2010 and 2013. In his book, he wrote:

> "In my capacity as the Chief of the Counter-terrorism Division, I personally witnessed in 2013 that the Turkish hospitals in the south-east treated free of charge members of the terrorist Da'esh organization who had been injured. I also saw that those terrorists were protected in most cases by Turkish police. During my work as chief of security, I received instructions for providing injured combatants with security services. In August 2014, the man who was the right arm of Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi and six men of his group were injured during an air strike. They received treatment in a private hospital in Sanliurfa, southern Turkey. Doctors in that hospital told me that the Turkish Government covered all their expenses."

This is a Turkish writer who refers in his book to the terrorist acts perpetrated by the Turkish regime, namely, violating all Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism by providing support to terrorists inside Turkey. Now the city of Gaziantep is called the Turkish Tora Bora. It has become a safe haven for terrorist groups and where they undergo training and conduct tests on using toxic chemicals, which are transferred, with the help of the Turkish regime, to Syria, where they are used against civilians in my country.

Mrs. Koçyiğit Grba (Turkey): I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor one more time. I will not take up your valuable time, and I will not honour the Syrian regime's representative by addressing the details of his statement, which we reject in its entirety.

The President: I declare closed the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 65.

Agenda item 99 (*continued*)

General and complete disarmament

(cc) Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament

Draft decision (A/72/L.50)

The President: The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/72/L.50, entitled "United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/72/L.50?

Draft decision A/72/L.50 was adopted (decision 72/556).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (cc) of agenda item 99.

Agenda item 114 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(a) Election of twenty members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination

Note by the Secretary-General (A/72/612/Add.1)

The President: Pursuant to General Assembly decision 42/450, of 17 December 1987, and upon the nomination by the Economic and Social Council, the Assembly elects the members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

Members will recall that, at its 71st plenary meeting, held on 11 December 2017, the General Assembly elected 17 members to the Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2018 and expiring on 31 December 2020.

Members will also recall that, by its decision 2018/201 B, of 5 December 2017, the Economic and Social Council postponed the nomination of one member from among the Group of African States, one member from among the Group of the Latin American and Caribbean States and one member from among the Group of Western European and other States for election for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2018 and expiring on 31 December 2020.

In that connection, the Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/72/612/Add.1. As indicated in that document, by its decision 2018/201 E, of 16 April 2018, the Economic and Social Council nominated Chad and Italy for election by the General Assembly to fill outstanding vacancies in the Committee for Programme and Coordination for a term of office beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2020.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, all elections should be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations. However, I should like to recall paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on the basis of dispensing with the secret ballot?

It was so decided.

The President: The number of States nominated from among the Group of African States and among the Group of Western European and other States is equal to the number of seats to be filled in each of those groups.

May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to declare Chad and Italy elected as members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination for a term of office beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2020?

It was so decided.

The President: I congratulate Chad and Italy on their elections as members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

Members are informed that the Economic and Social Council, in its decision 2018/201 E, decided to further postpone the nomination of one member from among the Group of Western European and other States for election by the General Assembly for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2018, and one member from among the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States for election by the Assembly for a term beginning on the date of election and expiring on 31 December 2020.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 114.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

United Nations A/72/PV.88

General Assembly
Seventy-second session

Official Records

88th plenary meeting
Thursday, 10 May 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lajčák .... (Slovakia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 140 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/72/713/Add.5)

The President: I would like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/72/713/Add.5, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that since the issuance of the document contained in A/72/713/Add.4, Yemen has made the payment necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the information contained in documents A/72/713/Add.5?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 14 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Draft resolution (A/72/L.51)

Draft amendment (A/72/L.53)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of France to introduce draft resolution A/72/L.51.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of its 90 sponsors, draft resolution A/72/L.51, entitled "Towards a Global Pact for the Environment".

The unprecedented degradation of the environment is, we know, already causing hundreds of thousands of deaths owing to global warming, water and air pollution, and the degradation of biodiversity and soil. Those environmental impacts affect primarily the most vulnerable populations. If we do not act decisively, we know we will be exposed to tragic consequences: the depletion of natural resources, an exodus of people and renewed conflicts.

The 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development established guidelines for the protection of the environment and various multilateral tools have been developed in several specific areas to address environmental challenges. Faced with the environmental emergency, the international community must take on new responsibilities and move forward. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the early entry into force of the Paris Agreement have shown that it is possible to take concrete and ambitious action on environmental issues. By developing a new tool to strengthen our commitments to the environment, we are rising to current and future challenges.

Draft resolution A/72/L.51, which we are introducing today, would contribute to that common effort. It would establish an open-ended working group to identify gaps in international environmental law and instruments and to assess the need for a new

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international instrument. The working group would also make recommendations to the General Assembly between now and mid-2019, with the possibility of convening an intergovernmental conference. Finally, the whole process would be supported by the United Nations Environment Programme, with the assistance of voluntary contributions.

The draft resolution that we are introducing today has been discussed at length. I would like to thank our many sponsors and all representatives for their commitment to this resolutely inclusive step that we are taking. The draft resolution is the result of a compromise and does not prejudge the future of the discussions in the open-ended working group or pre-empt decisions that would be taken by the General Assembly upon recommendations of the working group. It aims to generate discussions — discussions based on founding principles and solid bases — such as those established at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the sectoral conventions, in particular on climate, biodiversity, desertification, waste and chemical products. It is our common responsibility to raise our ambitions together to protect the planet and to obtain the appropriate tools to do so.

As I emphasized, the draft resolution is the balanced outcome of a very constructive negotiation. France has also made considerable efforts, as the Assembly knows, to reach an acceptable consensus, including by making significant compromises on the text and by taking everyone's desires and concerns fully into consideration. That is why we regret that a request to change that balance was proposed at the last minute. We therefore respectfully and amicably invite Kenya to take those compromise efforts into consideration and to withdraw its amendment. We also regret that a vote has been requested on our text. Let us hope that the best interests of the planet will prevail and that those who have called for that vote will amicably reverse their decision.

In conclusion, as I stated at the beginning of this meeting, we invite all delegations to support the procedural draft resolution "Towards a Global Pact for the Environment". Once again, I warmly thank all delegations for their commitment, support and positive vote.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya to introduce draft amendment A/72/L.53.

Ms. Grignon (Kenya): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting to consider draft resolution A/72/L.51, entitled "Towards a Global Pact for the Environment". I have taken the floor on behalf of the delegation of Kenya and the Kenyan Government to propose amendments to paragraph 5, as contained in document A/72/L.53.

In part (a), we propose deleting the word "preferably", and in part (b), we propose replacing the words "an initial substantive session" with the words "substantive sessions". In proposing those amendments, we wish to strongly reaffirm that Nairobi is the environmental capital of the United Nations, and that we strongly believe that all substantive sessions of the open-ended working group are at the core of the mandate and the functions of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and should be held in Nairobi in order to maintain the integrity of both UNEP and its secretariat.

Kenya supports the initiative to address environmental challenges in all their manifestations, and the proposed draft resolution is an important initiative to that end. That is why we have proposed amending paragraph 5 to make it acceptable and also to ensure that all those who support the strengthening of UNEP and the United Nations Office at Nairobi have the opportunity to engage constructively.

Our proposal to have Nairobi as a venue for all substantive sessions is based on a number of resolutions and decisions of the United Nations. Those resolutions and decisions include but are not limited to the decision adopted by Heads of State and Government in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held from 20 to 22 June 2012, which is contained in the outcome document of the Conference, entitled "The future we want" (resolution 66/288). That decision was adopted to strengthen the headquarters functions of Nairobi and the United Nations Environment Programme in accordance with the following statement.

> "We are committed to strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda" (*resolution 66/288, annex, para.88*).

That decision allowed the full participation of all 193 States Members of the United Nations in the UNEP Governing Council from February 2013 as part of the commitments of the world leaders at the Conference to improving the institutional framework for sustainable development.

In addition, all the decisions and resolutions of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) have continued to reaffirm the integrity of UNEP and its secretariat, and therefore of the need to strengthen them, including by strengthening the host-country function of Kenya as the only United Nations headquarters in the global South. The most recent of those decisions was adopted in 2017 by the UNEA Council at its third meeting, as resolution UNEP/EA.3/L.28, which, in paragraph 1,

> "reiterates the importance of the Nairobi headquarters location of the United Nations Environmental Programme and reaffirms its commitment to the effective consolidation of headquarters functions in Nairobi and the strengthening of UNEP's regional presence".

These important United Nations decisions and resolutions must therefore be respected. That is why the delegation of Kenya is inviting and urging all members of UNEP, which is all of us gathered here today, to show strong support for UNEP, UNEA and the secretariat by voting in favour of the amendments that the Kenyan delegation is proposing and thereafter supporting the draft resolution.

The amendments are aimed at guaranteeing a strong and vibrant UNEP. Any meeting that is held outside Nairobi therefore undermines the ability of UNEP and UNON to function and carry out the universal mandate that members of the General Assembly gave UNEP in this very Hall only six years ago. We therefore urge the Assembly to stand with UNEP and UNEA and their secretariat, and with Kenya. I ask members to vote for our proposed amendments and to stand with us. Kenya believes very strongly that the entire United Nations fraternity has the obligation to address environmental challenges, and that is best done by strengthening UNEP, UNEA and UNON.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/72/L.51 and draft amendment A/72/L.53. In connection with draft resolution A/72/L.51, I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): The following statement is made in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

On behalf of the United Nations Environmental Programme, I would like to present to the General Assembly an oral statement related to the voluntary contributions to cover the costs associated with draft resolution A/72/L.51, entitled "Towards a Global Pact for the Environment". As the draft resolution mandates, its implementation will be based on voluntary contributions. As such, the ability to carry out the activities requested will depend on the timely provision of those contributions on a voluntary basis. Copies of the statement that I have just read will also be made available on the PaperSmart portal.

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the voting, I would like to remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Simonoff (United States of America): This explanation of vote pertains to draft resolution A/72/L.51 as a whole, not to the amendment just proposed.

The United States regrets that we have had to call for a vote on this draft resolution and that we will have to vote against it. There has so far been no transparent, open discussion among Member States about the need for or purpose of a new international environmental instrument. The United States opposes a draft resolution that in its title alone purports to prejudge movement "Towards a Global Pact for the Environment", when the concept itself remains ambiguous, and when Member States have not yet considered the merits of such a proposal or how it would contribute to the existing international environmental regime.

The United States engaged constructively in the negotiations on this draft resolution. In fact, in a spirit of compromise, we have been willing to support the establishment of an open-ended working group to examine whether there are gaps in the existing environmental system and, if so, possible options for addressing those gaps. However, the United States cannot support the title or any language in the draft resolution's paragraph 2 that would prejudge the working group's discussions or presume, before particular international environmental challenges have even been identified, that a new international instrument would be the most appropriate solution.

We also cannot accept the language in the seventh preambular paragraph of the draft resolution indicating that environmental challenges should be addressed in a "comprehensive" manner. In fact, such language ignores the fact that many of the most successful environmental agreements, such as the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer or the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, are narrowly tailored to address specific environmental problems. Our concerns on these points were not sufficiently addressed or taken into account.

One of our fundamental interests throughout this process has been to ensure that this proposal does not disrupt or distract from the continuing implementation of existing international environmental agreements, and we believe that many delegations share our concerns in that regard. As a result, going forward, we understand paragraph 9 as recognizing that nothing in this process or any outcome of it should affect the rights and obligations of parties under existing agreements. At the same time, given that some of the proponents of a global pact have suggested that it should include a re-examination of certain environmental principles, such as the Rio principles referenced in the fourth preambular paragraph, the United States cannot support language reaffirming those principles in this context.

The United States has therefore called for a vote on this draft resolution and will vote against it, and we urge other Member States to do so as well. The United States believes that consensus on the draft resolution could have been achieved if appropriate consideration had been given to Member States' legitimate concerns. We are unaware of any successful environmental negotiations that have been initiated by vote over the objections of Member States on a truncated schedule, and we regret that more time was not allocated to achieving agreement on a path forward or for Member States to engage in productive debate. We will now look ahead to a discussion with other Member States of the substantive merits of this proposal in the open-ended working group.

Mr. Kononuchenko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation intends to vote against draft resolution A/72/L.51, entitled "Towards a Global Pact for the Environment", introduced by France.

We would like to draw the Assembly's attention to the process of putting together the draft resolution, which was not a constructive one. We and a number of other delegations repeatedly made principled suggestions about the texts, but they were persistently ignored. The coordinators expressed no desire to seek mutually acceptable wording for the text, and after the silence procedure refused to conduct further negotiations. We therefore still believe that achieving consensus on the draft resolution is possible.

The Russian Federation strongly supports environmental protection and sustainable development at the national, regional and global levels, including through the implementation of the relevant international instruments, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Accord of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and other documents that deal with specific issues. To date, there are more than 1,000 different instruments on the environment, which cover various topics and geographical areas. They have different legal statuses and are the outcome of a fragile compromise among Member States.

On the basis of the above, the global discussion on environmental issues should focus primarily on implementing the existing instruments and on supporting developing countries. The French initiative should be carefully and broadly considered before we can begin to discuss a global agreement. During the consultations on the draft resolution submitted, we thought it important to focus the efforts of the ad hoc open-ended working group on considering the possibility of improving implementation of the existing instruments on the environment rather than on establishing a new instrument.

We believe that the work of the open-ended working group should be carried out in an intergovernmental format, in particular since its outcome could be the conclusion of a new intergovernmental document. We are convinced that the draft resolution should not pre-empt the outcome of the discussion that takes place within the working group. We are ready to constructively participate in the discussion of further steps with regard to the French initiative.

Ms. Ponce (Philippines): The protection of the environment is one of the highest policy priorities of the Philippines — so much so that it is enshrined in our Constitution. The Constitution's Declaration of Principles and State Policies proclaims that the State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature.

It may be recalled that the integration of environmental concerns was accomplished primarily through the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio in 1992, where two major agreements were adopted — the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity — while another accord is still a work in progress, with the Forest Principles already adopted. It may be further recalled that an overarching agreement was also adopted in Agenda 21, which sets out the principles and the way forward for mainstreaming the environment into socioeconomic development planning and implementation. Going further back, there was the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm in 1972, which placed human development, anchored in the environment, at the centre of the economic development of countries.

Therefore, there already exists an integrated framework for the global community's work on the environment and its sustainable development, which brings together the social, economic and environmental spheres to support human development in a sustainable manner. The current global framework on the environment, more specifically the critical environmental problems associated with climate change, biodiversity loss, the pollution of our seas and the proliferation of harmful chemicals and toxic wastes, is the elaboration of agreed solutions through a deductive approach, working out the operational details in a continuous, albeit protracted manner.

What remains to be done is to deliver the commitments, anchored on the Agenda 21 principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. It is recommended that any solution put forward be in that context, not in the formulation of another consolidated environment-centric agreement, which has the potential of renegotiating already agreed principles and solutions.

While we recognize the value of France's initiative to have a global framework to address the protection of the environment, it is important that the process be transparent and consultative and that it take into consideration the concerns of all Member States. It is essential that Member States be able to conduct extensive national inter-agency and stakeholder consultations and studies to determine if, in their view, the existing environmental law framework and instruments are sufficient or whether there is a need for a new intergovernmental process. That cannot be rushed and conducted over an abbreviated period.

It is also important that the solidarity of the Group of 77 be respected. It is unfortunate that France did not consult with the Chair of the Group of 77 to determine if it would negotiate as a group on the draft resolution prior to engaging bilaterally with its member States.

The decision to initiate a global intergovernmental process for a major issue, such as a global pact for the environment, must be taken on the basis of consensus, not by voting. A call for a vote reflects a lack of agreement among Member States and undermines the multilateral process, as well as the political importance and validity of the draft resolution (A/72/L.51) and the initiative.

For that reason, the Philippines will vote against the draft resolution.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/72/L.51, entitled "Towards a global pact for the environment".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of A/72/L.51: Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belize, the Comoros, the Dominican Republic, Fiji, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Liberia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Samoa, San Marino, Sweden, Ukraine and Uruguay.

The President: In accordance with rule 90 of the Assembly's rules of procedure, the Assembly will first take a decision on the proposed draft amendment, issued as document A/72/L.53.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft amendment, contained in document A/72/L.53?

The amendment was adopted.

The President: A recorded vote has been requested on draft resolution A/72/L.51, as amended.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen

Against:

Iran (Islamic Republic of), Philippines, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, United States of America

Abstaining:

Belarus, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan

Draft resolution A/72/L.51, as amended, was adopted by 143 to 6, with 6 abstentions (resolution 72/277).

[Subsequently, the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran informed the Secretariat that it had intended to abstain; the delegation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: Before giving the floor for explanations of vote, I would remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of Bulgaria, who will speak on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Panayotov (Bulgaria): I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

We would like to take this opportunity to voice our disappointment with one country's decision to submit amendments to paragraph 5 of resolution 72/277 at this stage of the process. The issue of the location of meetings of the open-ended working group was discussed at length over a negotiation process that lasted three months, with different countries or groups of countries presenting their not very divergent views. The formulation coined by the facilitators was aimed at bridging differences, while not prejudging but also not excluding the possibility of holding the working group's meetings in New York, Nairobi or elsewhere.

The European Union and its member States commend the facilitators' efforts in this regard. We are now looking forward to constructive discussions within the open-ended working group to advance this valuable initiative, a global pact for the environment, which seeks to address the challenges posed by environmental degradation caused, to a large extent, by human activity and which threatens our societies as well as international stability.

Ms. Grignon (Kenya): On behalf of the people and the Government of Kenya, I would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to all the delegations that joined the consensus in support of our proposed amendments. As has been stated, this is the way that the business of the United Nations should be conducted. We are also delighted that the majority of delegations supported the adoption of resolution 72/277. It goes a long way towards demonstrating the seriousness with which this matter has been taken.

It also demonstrates the seriousness with which delegations address enumerated issues with which the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi is engaged. We are honoured to see that having UNEP in Nairobi provide secretariat services is meaningful to the General Assembly. In fact, it is the only way the open-ended working group will operate with any effectiveness — by receiving special expertise on the environment and Secretariat services relating to the work that the working group proposes from the secretariat at UNEP in Nairobi, whose integrity, as I mentioned previously, must be maintained.

We further appreciate that this proposal from Kenya, as a host country, was also adopted. We therefore assure the entire United Nations family that my country will continue to play its positive and crucial role as a host to the only United Nations organ headquartered in global South. As a host country, we continue to implore all 193 States Members of the United Nations to establish their presence in Nairobi. We believe that this is a positive step towards ensuring full participation in all meetings of UNEP, as envisaged in 2012 when the General Assembly adopted resolution 67/213.

As we indicated in our earlier statement, Kenya takes seriously all environmental and climate-change challenges, and as a leading champion on environmental matters we have actually demonstrated this course by banning the use of plastic bags for the sake of securing the environment, and by putting in place other legal and institutional frameworks in order to ensure that we achieve sustainable environmental management and protection. Our position is anchored in the ever-expanding environmental and climate-change challenges in all parts of the global, be it in developed or developing countries.

I take this opportunity to thank the delegation of France for proposing the draft resolution and for the hard work that was done to ensure that all of us work towards a consensus on moving this process forward. I also want to thank the Group of 77 and China for embracing resolution 72/277 and negotiations on it as a unified group, and on behalf of UNEP, the United Nations Office at Nairobi, and Nairobi itself.

Mrs. Silva Maturana (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to say a few words in explanation of the vote that my delegation has just cast. This vote shows our respect for multilateralism and is cast with the best intentions of making progress on an issue that our country and our President have always considered to be of prime importance: trying to build respect at all times for the integrity of the vital systems and environmental functions of our planet.

The search for consensus solutions to the environmental problems whose structural cause is capitalism did not begin today, and it will continue to be part of our agenda for a long time to come. The resolution that we have adopted today (resolution 72/277) is just one more step on the long road that we have already been travelling on, and it should allow us to bring together efforts aimed at fighting against the degradation of our environment. A failure to adopt the resolution would have constituted a setback in the negotiations that are being carried out in other multilateral forums where our countries have decided to carry out this dialogue since 1992.

I would like to highlight my delegation's concern about involving other stakeholders in the resolution. Caring for and defending the integrity of our environment must involve all citizens of the world. However, accountability belongs to and actions must always be carried out by our Governments. Along this path and in order to avoid getting lost in minor discussions, it is important to remember the principles that have guided consensus, as well as scenarios we will continue to defend in this context as the Plurinational State of Bolivia and as a member of the Group of 77 and China.

First, a more just and democratic system can be created only together and in correspondence and solidarity with and for the benefit of our people.

Secondly, States have the sovereign right to exploit their own resources, to identify their own environmental policies and development priorities, and to seek a balance between human rights and a dignified and healthy life and the rights of Mother Earth.

Thirdly, any initiative aimed at addressing the environmental and climate crisis should be based on the principles already established in the Framework Convention on Climate Change, such as common but differentiated responsibilities, whereby the countries of the North have to shoulder their historic responsibilities for climate change, as well as the climate debt they owe to countries of the South.

Fourthly, a global pact for the environment will have meaning only if it includes the interests of all States. We must therefore redouble our efforts to achieve consensus. Obtrusive or hasty attitudes will not inspire confidence in the process, nor does the position of certain countries that are withdrawing from and do not respect the agreements they have entered into with the international community and the planet itself. Those principles guide us in every sovereign decision that we make, and we will continue to defend them at every stage of the process, beginning with this resolution.

Mrs. Shurbaji (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country's delegation would like to express its position vis-à-vis the initiative to adopt a global pact for the environment, and vis-à-vis resolution 72/277, entitled "Towards a Global Pact for the Environment".

At the outset, the Syrian Arab Republic emphasizes the importance of fostering and activating international instruments and conventions on the environment and addressing the loopholes and problems that impede their implementation. However, we do not believe that one document will achieve that goal or that creating a global pact for the environment will provide the optimal solution to activate instruments and conventions that are different in scope and have different memberships and legal nature.

The concept of international environmental law is not yet agreed upon internationally, especially with regard to its legally non-binding nature. Member States abide by those environmental instruments in accordance with their circumstances and national priorities. Any attempt to address the current international environmental system therefore requires the General Assembly to adopt clear language that emphasizes national sovereignty over natural resources and that any proposed commitments should take into consideration current international instruments and national policies.

Finally, the establishment of an open-ended working group should take place in the light of a number of conditions, most important of which is the establishment of an intergovernmental working group, allowing other stakeholders to participate in it but ensuring that decision-making is reserved to the Governments of Member States. It is imperative to underscore that the main objective in establishing a working group must be to address the loopholes in international environmental law and instruments, including by submitting recommendations to the General Assembly with the aim of convening an international conference for the adoption of the global pact. This is inconsistent with the title of the resolution, which calls for a global pact for the environment as a final goal.

In conclusion, we must focus on achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions: economic, social and environmental. This should be done when we seek to study and identify loopholes in the current system and international instruments and conventions related to the environment. Achieving the goals and objectives of sustainable development to which we aspire is the basis for finding the appropriate means without giving up the principle of the shared and differentiated responsibilities of Member States in this regard. Therefore, and based on the above, my country's delegation voted against the resolution.

Mr. Xu Zhongsheng (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China supports the international community in enhancing dialogue and cooperation and addressing environmental protection and other sustainable development issues through multilateral platforms.

China commends and expresses its appreciation for the French initiative, entitled "Towards a Global Pact for the Environment". China is of the view that the development of environment-related international instruments concerns international environmental law and the fundamental interests of all States. The process should therefore be driven by Member States and based on extensive consultations so as to achieve the broadest possible consensus.

The General Assembly and its ad hoc open-ended working group should be guided by the principle of consensus and the intergovernmental nature of the working group must be maintained. When deepening international cooperation on environmental governance, the interests of all parties should be taken into consideration in a comprehensive manner.

First, the consideration of environmental issues should remain within the framework of sustainable development for the benefit of greater coordination and harmonization between environmental protection and economic and social development.

Secondly, the principle of common but differentiated responsibility should be upheld, and developing countries should be helped to steadily improve their environmental governance and sustainable development capabilities.

Thirdly, the principle of national sovereignty over environmental resources should be adhered to as a prerequisite for international cooperation on the environment and a right bestowed upon States by the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of general international law.

Fourthly, developing countries must be fully involved and their concerns must be fully respected. In the pursuit of economic development and better livelihood, developing countries have a genuine need to enhance environmental protection and governance, and therefore should become indispensable participants in international environmental governance.

Mr. Momeni (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, our delegation supported a fully Member State-driven process and, as some speakers have mentioned, a process based on respect for the sovereign rights of countries and the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. Furthermore, we support the existing processes and we believe that there are enough existing processes. We are concerned that the new processes damage the current processes.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I just want to warmly thank the Member States for their constructive spirit and support, which enabled us to achieve today's excellent result of 143 votes in favour of resolution 72/277. We are particularly encouraged by the support of approximately 100 sponsors. We are pleased to follow up with discussions with all delegations in the open-ended working group in this same open and inclusive spirit. The Assembly can count on France's dedicated commitment to that end, in order to come together for environmental protection with a view to protecting the environment and our planet.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 14.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

United Nations A/72/PV.89

General Assembly

Seventy-second session

Official Records

89th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 22 May 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lajčák .... (Slovakia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 126

Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/791)

Draft resolution (A/72/L.54)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico to introduce draft resolution A/72/L.54.

Mr. Gómez Camacho (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/72/L.54, entitled "Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". The text outlines the links between our Organization and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and lays out a vision for the future with regard to issues on the multilateral agenda such as sustainable peace, rapid technological change and health.

With regard to the links between the United Nations and national parliaments, the relationship must ensure that international commitments are translated into national policies and laws that benefit everyone. In the light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, one goal is to strengthen the ability of legislators to allocate budget resources aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Our text calls on the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU to engage in closer cooperation and mandates the Secretary-General to submit a report with a list of best practices to support parliaments. It also invites them to become more involved in the system by participating in the voluntary national reviews for the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. More specifically, we have incorporated new perspectives, such as addressing the issue of violence against women in politics. We also emphasize the participation of young people in politics and acknowledged the contribution of the IPU to the preparatory process for a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

The work of the States Members of the United Nations would be futile without the efforts led by our parliamentarians to guide and determine the financing of national programmes that meet the Organization's goals. By strengthening the ties between legislators, the IPU and the United Nations, we can respond more effectively to the needs of our citizens. I therefore invite all delegations to support this draft resolution and proceed to its adoption.

Mr. Budhu (Trinidad and Tobago): At the outset, my delegation is pleased to be participating in today's plenary meeting to discuss agenda item 126, on the interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and also to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the subject (A/72/791).

At the very centre of any form of democracy stands a parliament. It enshrines the democratic values of a society, encompasses the principles and ideologies of freedom, human rights and the rule of law and safeguards transparency and accountability through political

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dialogue and concrete action. In essence, parliaments have the honourable task of ensuring Government by the people and for the people. In the performance of their functions of legislation, representation and oversight, parliaments can engage in developing and implementing laws and policies that promote democracy and good governance. However, good governance is not a luxury, but a fundamental requirement for achieving peace and security, economic and social empowerment and sustainable development, especially in the goals set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Parliaments can ensure that the principles of the 2030 Agenda are enshrined in national development strategies by translating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into enforceable national laws that respond to country-specific development priorities, monitoring their implementation and ensuring that Government is accountable to the people for national progress on the SDGs. In that regard, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago fully recognizes that national ownership of the SDGs is critical to ensuring that no one is left behind. However, one of the challenges facing the Agenda worldwide involves raising awareness of the global Goals, not only to the broad public but also to those in key positions of leadership and decision-making. In order to achieve that, the Goals must be localized from country to country through inclusive and participatory approaches, including open and transparent consultation in parliament. Shortly after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, therefore, the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago passed a motion, with full bipartisan support, committing to helping to implement the Agenda through acts of legislation, including the national budget.

Following that, in 2017 the Government of Trinidad and Tobago laid its Vision 2030 national development strategy before Parliament. Vision 2030 is an ambitious strategic development plan that is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, comprehensive in scope and cross-cutting in nature in order to ensure that its implementation is coherent, integrative and collaborative. Recognizing the important role of representative participation by all citizens, the strategy aims to strengthen our democratic institutions. Mechanisms must be established by which citizens can participate in national decision-making, thereby making public policy more responsive to the needs of the population. That will involve strengthening the Office of the Parliament, establishing wider and more structured public consultations and enhancing citizen participation in governance through information and communications technology.

As a small island developing State (SIDS), Trinidad and Tobago welcomes the fact that the Secretary-General's report makes specific reference to the role of parliaments in the prevention of natural disasters. In that regard, following the devastation of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in the Caribbean last year, the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, in collaboration with the United Nations country team in Port of Spain, hosted a regional parliamentarian retreat on building Caribbean resilience. The retreat focused on deepening the knowledge of parliamentarians on Caribbean resilience in the face of disasters and the policy strategy and guidelines necessary for building national- and regional-level resilience. One important session focused on the question of budgetary mechanisms and the funding of disaster-risk-reduction programmes that can adequately address the special circumstances and vulnerabilities facing Caribbean SIDS.

That multi-stakeholder initiative is just one example of the shift that is needed to achieve the SDGs. All stakeholders, from all arms of Government and corners of society, must be sufficiently empowered and provided with the relevant information and knowledge, education and training so that they can effectively and meaningfully participate in processes converging towards a common goal. In that regard, Trinidad and Tobago commends the efforts of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), other national parliaments and the United Nations to provide support to translate the SDGs into action, and further supports deepening the interactions between the IPU and the United Nations as part of a broad multi-stakeholder approach to implementing an integrated and multidimensional 2030 Agenda. On that basis, Trinidad and Tobago would like to express its gratitude to the delegation of Mexico for leading us in the consultative process and is pleased to join with others in sponsoring draft resolution A/72/L.54.

Mr. Seddik (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to sincerely congratulate the delegation of Mexico for introducing draft resolution A/72/L.54, on interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). We welcome the fact that the text has been sponsored by several delegations.

I would like to reiterate our support for the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron, and its Secretary General, Mr. Martin Chungong, and their remarkable efforts, and to commend the Organization's excellent relations with the IPU.

As a member of the IPU since 1977, the Algerian Parliament has made an active and constructive contribution to its work, in which I have the honour to participate as a member of the bureau of the IPU's Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs. That contribution has to do with all of the IPU's various areas of action and is based on a productive exchange of experience and best practices.

My country, Algeria, co-authored the text of draft resolution A/72/L.54, which, I need hardly point out, reflects the ever-growing significance of the role played by parliaments in the multilateral arena and highlights the importance of strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and national parliaments, represented by the worldwide organization of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, in all the Organization's areas of activity. That cooperation, which is intended to have many aspects, covers major sectors of our societies with a direct impact on the daily lives of the citizens whom we represent and on their very exercise of citizenship, in accordance with the rule of law. They include democracy, human rights, gender equality, the empowerment of women, the combating of violence against women, including in political life, young people's participation in peace and security, disarmament, non-proliferation, sustainable development and interfaith and inter-ethnic dialogue, as well as the fight against terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism that can lead to terrorism.

This cooperation also contributes to our goals of achieving peace and resolving all conflict situations with the help of parliamentary diplomacy, its mechanisms and its potential, in the service of our peoples and nations. We, the parliamentarians, are effective instruments that we should never neglect to make use of. We look forward to the holding of the IPU world conference on interfaith and inter-ethnic dialogue, with the participation of Heads of State, parliamentarians and representatives of various religions, and we support the draft resolution's call to involve the United Nations.

Mr. Gertze (Namibia): Namibia would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/72/791) on draft resolution A/72/L.54. We also take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Mission of Mexico, as the country holding the presidency of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and therefore the penholder of the draft resolution, for its initiative on agenda item 126.

The General Assembly has adopted this biannual resolution by consensus since 2004. That is clear testimony to the scope of the cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations, and demonstrates the importance of constructive partnership with parliaments as critical stakeholders in resolving today's global challenges. The draft resolution continues to encourage parliamentarians' deeper involvement in the work of the United Nations both as advisers and as implementers of decisions made in the Organization. Namibia is encouraged by the IPU's work in implementing and mobilizing Government actions across the planet towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We are therefore happy that the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change have received special mention. For Namibia, a desert country dealing with the challenges of addressing the effects of both droughts and floods, those are essential instruments and frameworks for ensuring the positive implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Namibia has achieved 47 per cent gender parity in its Parliament. While we continue to improve in the area of parliamentary and other local representation, we are pleased with the work of the IPU in the critical areas of gender equality, the empowerment of women and fighting violence against women. Those achievements cannot be underestimated, considering that less than 30 years ago, at the time of Namibia's independence, the percentage of women parliamentarians globally was at a mere 10 per cent. While that average has grown to almost 24 per cent today, there is still a long way to go and we must continue to encourage and support the IPU in its work in that area.

It is essential that when we make laws and policies, we ensure that the views of all stakeholders in society, including women and young people, are taken into account. It is for that reason that Namibia greatly appreciates the critical work done by the IPU in the areas of youth empowerment and ensuring the participation of young men and women in politics.

In conclusion, it is for those reasons, and those mentioned by our fellow States Members of the United

Nations present here today, that Namibia firmly supports the draft resolution and encourages unanimous support for its adoption.

Mr. Romero (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour to participate in this meeting as a member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), where I was recently elected President of the Committee on United Nations Affairs, and as a Senator of Argentina. At the outset, I would like to express our gratitude for the support that many countries have shown in promoting draft resolution A/72/L.54, introduced today.

The interrelationship between the United Nations, members of parliaments and the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union is key. We are all partners in the common idea of helping our countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and address other challenges. Through our parliaments, we have a role in drawing up plans and national strategies through parliamentary action and Government management so that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can become a reality, as well as in promoting transparency and overseeing management, both nationally and at other levels of Government.

Today we are navigating a complex world. It has therefore become crucial to enhance South-South cooperation, in the understanding that the economy should serve the people through comprehensive social policies. In the draft resolution introduced today we have a clear guide to help us make progress in working energetically to create public policies that are committed to supporting development with social goals that can benefit the majority of our citizens.

In 2001, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights defined poverty as a lack of capacities, options, security and opportunities for enjoying an acceptable standard of living. In recent years, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals have influenced the discussion on fighting poverty at the global level. However, it has become clear that this discussion calls for local involvement on the part of every country and that appropriate national policies and concrete actions are required to achieve those Goals.

Every one of us has a role to play, especially when it comes to poverty reduction. The eradication of poverty in all its forms remains one of the greatest challenges facing humankind. While the number of people living in extreme poverty was halved from 1,900 million in 1990 to 830 million in 2015, many human beings continue to live in extreme poverty. While areas such as China and India account for a large part of poverty reduction, at the global level rapid global demographic growth has seen a more modest reduction in the number of people living in poverty. Progress in other regions has been limited. For example, in Latin America, poverty remains high, with around 29 per cent of the population living in poverty in 2015, up from 28.5 per cent in 2014, showing what a difficult task this is to achieve.

Child poverty is another of the most visible and distressing components of poverty because it deprives many millions of children of access to education as a way to overcome difficulties. A great deal remains to be done. However, we are encouraged when we see that it is possible when we look at countries that have managed to make progress by pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level. Speaking of education, it is important to note that national growth is closely linked to access to education for children and young people. There can be no doubt that access to education is another important component of the fight against poverty.

Sustainable growth demands that we strengthen various productive links — agriculture, industry, the environment and technology. In the words of Amartya Sen, it is important to close educational gaps and remove disparities in access and inclusion to make the world more secure as well as more fair.

We need collective efforts to identify and share effective strategies and take action in all countries. Leaving no one behind means valuing the dignity of every human being. We must make progress at the community level a priority. Women, children, the fight for equality, the harsh realities of poverty — these are not only economic and financial issues, but together represent a challenge to be tackled head on and overcome. By investing more of ourselves each day as supporters and champions of this fight, we will generate new horizons for sustainable socioeconomic development. As legislators, we can work with our Governments to actively and resolutely uphold the commitments undertaken here. We can achieve the 2030 Agenda by formulating and pursuing a variety of legislative initiatives at the national level that reflect its transformative goals. We all share the responsibility to ensure that no one is left behind by working to promote the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. Kuzmenkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would first like to thank the delegation of Mexico for its efforts in facilitating agreement on the text of draft resolution A/72/L.54, on interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Our delegation has become a sponsor of this important draft resolution, which is aimed at strengthening interaction between the two organizations and national parliaments, which in turn can help to enhance the role of parliaments and foster mutual understanding and dialogue among States.

Russia attaches great importance to the activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which makes a significant contribution to the development of parliamentary diplomacy. A non-politicized, mutually respectful and constructive exchange of views among parliamentarians facilitates effective solutions to contemporary international problems. In that regard, strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and that representative inter-parliamentary organization is significant in the context of both reinforcing democracy and maintaining peace.

The draft resolution before us reflects two important initiatives: the establishment of an International Day of Parliamentarism and the holding of a world conference on interfaith and inter-ethnic dialogue. We view the establishment of 30 June as the International Day of Parliamentarism as a milestone. We are pleased that in 2019 the international community will mark the 130th anniversary of the first Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which continues to be an authoritative forum for exchanging views in an atmosphere of equality and determination to reach decisions acceptable to all on a wide range of issues. As a multinational and multi-faith State, the Russian Federation believes firmly that the rise of new dividing lines, including those based on ethnic and religious differences, is pernicious. In this regard, we note with satisfaction the IPU's call for organizing a world conference on interfaith and inter-ethnic dialogue jointly with the United Nations, with the participation of Heads of State, parliaments and representatives of major religions.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore the fact that imposing sanctions on parliamentarians is unacceptable. It is crucial to ensure that States that hold international events on their territory give people's representatives the opportunity to take part in them and express their views. For example, when Russia hosted the 137th IPU Assembly in Saint Petersburg in October 2017, we permitted unimpeded entry to parliamentarians from every country in the world, without exception, who expressed an interest in taking part. We hope to see a similar non-discriminatory approach taken by all States Members of the United Nations organizing similar international events on their territory.

The President: I now give the floor to the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Ms. Cuevas Barron (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank the United Nations; the Inter-Parliamentary Union, composed of the leaders of Parliaments; my fellow parliamentarians all over the world and of course our organization's team for the opportunity to work on this draft resolution (A/72/L.54). I would like to express special thanks to the Permanent Mission of my own country, Mexico, which worked and pushed for this draft resolution on behalf of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. I also thank the missions that have made tireless efforts in contributing ideas and comments and thereby enriching the text that we worked on during our most recent meeting in Geneva and that today has taken its final form as a draft resolution.

This is an important moment for the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Our partnership with the United Nations started 20 years ago in response to people's demands for more transparent, effective and accountable governance. As the forces of globalization have grown stronger, people everywhere have felt more vulnerable and left out of decision-making processes, not just at the local level but also in the international arena, which rarely offers concrete solutions to local problems. That is where the work of parliamentarians comes in, to ensure that the views and voices of those we represent can reach the United Nations and are in harmony with Member States so that they can deliver on their international commitments.

How far along are we in our journey? We can be very proud of the results we have achieved. While we have not yet reached our final destination, the truth is that every day we are redoubling our efforts. We are working on new ways of collaborating so that we can once again achieve effective action and an ambitious vision. Today, old and new conflicts can be found threatening peace and security all over the planet. Climate change is forcing thousands of people to leave their homes in search of security, food and a safe roof over their heads. While gender equality has improved in some areas, the fact is that we are still far from fully realizing it, especially where women in politics are concerned. Income inequality has reached unprecedented levels and is eroding the foundations of the social contract that unites us and sustains our democracy. Politics everywhere is becoming more divisive and polarized, undermining people's trust. That gives us an important opportunity and duty to use our relationship as a key tool to transform these challenges into improved global governance.

As a long-serving parliamentarian, I know first-hand the importance of legislative work for getting results. Our work as parliamentarians is essential for ratifying international instruments and modifying our national legislation to make it reflect those commitments more accurately, especially in key areas such as human rights, the development agenda and climate change. And one of a legislator's most important jobs is preparing budgets. As parliamentarians we wield the most important tool for our countries' public policies. And, of course, it is our job to demand clear and timely accountability. In that way, we are the natural link between citizens, the people we represent and the global agenda. Secretary-General António Guterres, a former parliamentarian himself, understands the importance of engaging with parliamentarians in the decision-making process, and that is reflected in his report (A/72/791). We know how essential the participation of legislators is, just as the Inter-Parliamentary Union is such an essential link in all aspects of the United Nations system. We need citizens to be able to participate more closely in the United Nations system, especially when the Organization commits to working more closely with their representatives in its deliberations. That is when the results reflect the founding principle of the Charter of the United Nations, "we the peoples".

The Secretary-General's report highlights the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union at the United Nations in key areas such as democracy and human rights, peace and security, disarmament, gender equality and sustainable development. Today's draft resolution is a significant reflection of all that work and also opens the door to new areas of cooperation, including sustainable peace, inter-ethnic and interreligious dialogue and strategies for countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism. The Inter-Parliamentary Union has already partnered with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime through a joint programme to address the challenges of counter-terrorism and violent extremism, and above all to figure out how parliamentarians can take part in resolving them, especially where prevention is concerned.

Terrorism is a scourge that affects virtually the entire world. It should never be linked to any particular religion or region, nor should our societies ever accept it. Today our freedoms and democracies require that we carry out this important work. We will continue to do so alongside the United Nations so that, as legislators, we can do our best work to ensure that our laws can become tools to fight such threats to our democracies and freedoms.

As legislators and opinion-makers, parliamentarians have vital leadership roles in their countries. Our job, as the world organization of national parliaments, is to help create common ground among parliamentarians so that their voices across parties and genders can be articulated into a strong parliamentary perspective on global affairs. Our most important task is to ensure that, as representatives of the people, we work on solutions for all people everywhere and for the sustainability of the planet itself.

Through parliaments, the IPU promotes ideas and positive changes in United Nations processes, conventions and treaties. It also serves as a highly valuable resource for the United Nations, precisely because our work focuses on the implementation of these agreements. For instance, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the IPU and its 178 member States are working to ensure that the 17 Sustainable Development Goals can become a reality. We are particularly proud when it comes to Goal 16, because we are working to see concerted efforts made in favour of inclusivity, representation and transparent institutions for Governments. That means that parliamentarians should play a key positive role in realizing the changes envisioned under the 2030 Agenda. We do so through parliamentary hearings here at the United Nations, and in the various workshops we conduct in countries and regions around the world, where we focus directly on implementation, with a view to ensuring that the United Nations development agenda becomes a reality in all our communities.

Like the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union will continue working to ensure that absolutely no one is left behind. Among other things our work in the High-level Political Forum and with regard to voluntary national reviews is of great importance.

The IPU holds a side event designed to attract many parliamentarians so that they can get to know the United Nations better and work more closely with it. We also have a Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs and hold regional seminars with a view to ensuring that democratic governance always goes hand in hand with sustainable development and is integrated throughout our deliberations, decisions and actions. We also work with the various United Nations agencies to make these goals a reality.

Two years ago, in the previous iteration of our biannual resolution (resolution 70/298), the IPU committed to working with the United Nations on migration and the humanitarian agenda for refugees. Today that has become a reality. We devoted not only our annual hearing but also seminars, workshops, agreements and the most recent IPU Assembly in Geneva to ensuring that the voices of all parliamentarians from all countries, and the people they represent, are reflected in the IPU's work on the global compacts on migration and refugees. We believe that this debate should focus not on prejudices but on specific questions, and that agreements must be based on human rights, not xenophobic political narratives. We believe that the work of parliamentarians is crucial to ensuring that voices advocating safe and orderly migration are heard and that an agreement in favour of refugees, who have already suffered enough, can be reached and duly implemented in our countries. That work, begun two years ago, has now become a reality and brought results. The IPU has adopted important resolutions in this regard in the past year and a half. We are steadfastly committed to turning narratives of hatred and discrimination into one of the generosity and love that should unite this entire planet.

The IPU has a very important task in the area of women's empowerment and especially violence against women. While we realize there is a great deal to be done, we first want to welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General, who has shown by example that inclusion is possible, and that it can produce results almost immediately. Our work both with the Commission on the Status of Women and in fighting the discrimination and harassment faced by many women in politics in their countries is increasingly important. We know that there is much to be done, even in terms of changing many of our parliamentary rules. The presence of women in parliaments increased by only by 0.1 per cent in the past year. At that rate, it would take more than 250 years to reach parity. Our daughters, granddaughters and great-granddaughters cannot afford that luxury. Today more than ever, we need to work for women, not just for those of us who already in politics and have a voice and a right to vote, but for all the women and girls who want to realize their dreams and, like us, transform their communities and the planet.

Parliaments worldwide must become more inclusive and representative. They must genuinely tackle the concerns of our societies. In this regard, the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians has an important task, through the Economic and Social Council and its Youth Forum, to ensure that the voices of young people are truly heard in these forums. We have a long way to go, but as a young parliamentarian and President of the IPU, I feel obliged to take on this agenda. I am an example of how we include young parliamentarians in our organization. Yes, I am still a young parliamentarian, and I feel the obligation to work to enhance the participation of young people in decision-making, in particular in terms of parliamentary access. People under the age of 30 account for more than 50 per cent of the world's population today, but only 1.9 per cent of its parliamentarians; three of four countries have laws prohibiting people under the age of 30 from running for political office.

I want to underscore and acknowledge a very important step taken with this draft resolution, in that we reached a historic consensus in favour of recognizing 30 June as the International Day of Parliamentarism. We hope that will enable recognition of the efforts, dedication and achievements of the more than 46,000 men and women parliamentarians around the world who work tirelessly every day to represent their communities, effect change and find solutions to the problems we face. The voices, hands and hearts of those 46,000 people are united through the IPU, working to leave the world a better, more inclusive, peaceful and just place for future generations.

The work of a parliamentarian comes with many challenges. Indeed, the hard work never ends. Many of our colleagues — and it is therefore important to recognize it — carry out their work with very limited means. Others are subject to criticism, interference or marginalization in their own countries, parliaments or parties. Others are illegally persecuted or silenced.

It goes without saying that the International Day of Parliamentarism proposed in the draft resolution will also recognize the enormous efforts of women parliamentarians, who often have to work twice as hard to gain the least recognition.

I would also like to take advantage of this important forum because I believe that the General Assembly is a space that inspires, motivates and unquestionably compels us to become committed. This is a forum where all the countries of the world engage in dialogue. In it they find a place to reflect, take decisions and seek peace. But it should also be an exemplary forum for the Inter-Parliamentary Union, where we can work without exclusion and ensure that everyone can participate, where delegations represent a plurality and where women's voices are as powerful as men's. We will continue working and seeking the support of the United Nations so that we can ensure that all the events we hold here are representative of all the States members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. We would like to continue to work here and to work with the United Nations to ensure that every agreement reached here can become a reality.

A few years ago, during one of the meetings of the General Assembly, we said that we must translate our words into action. That is why we are here. We are here because we are believe that we can transform our communities by taking action at the global level. I am honoured to have this opportunity to work with my fellow parliamentarians, to whom I am grateful for the long distances they have travelled to be here today. I believe that our two organizations will continue to work together to make a tangible, genuine and significant difference in the lives of people across the planet. Our goal is to transform reality, put an end to preventable misery and devote all of our parliamentary time and effort to ensuring that our communities, our countries and our planet continue to be in agreement on the goals of the United Nations agenda, so that we can preserve democracy and respect for the promotion of human rights and the voices of parliamentarians representing the people who enabled us to be here.

I thank you, Mr. President, for today's draft resolution, which will continue to assist those working with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and our parliamentarians.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 126.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/72/L.54, entitled "Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in document A/72/L.54, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, the Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mali, Malta, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, the Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/72/L.54?

Draft resolution A/72/L.54 was adopted (resolution 72/278).

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position, I would like to remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): Ukraine has always considered the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to be the oldest inter-parliamentary institution and a uniquely authoritative one that, according to its statute, works for peace and cooperation among peoples, shares the objectives of the United Nations, supports its efforts and works in close cooperation with it.

Ukraine is a country whose Parliament plays a key role and is fully aware of its responsibility with regard not only to the peace and security of its own country, but also where international and regional peace and security are concerned. Since joining the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Ukraine has always proceeded on a basis of respect for international law and strict implementation by all IPU member States of its statutory commitments and obligations.

At its October 2016 session in Geneva, the IPU Governing Council took the decision to accept the invitation of the Parliament of the Russian Federation to host the 137th IPU Assembly in Saint Petersburg in October 2017. That decision was taken against the backdrop of the brutal acts of military aggression being committed by the Russian Federation against its neighbours, which in our case led to the temporary occupation of 7 per cent of Ukrainian territory. Russia is now committing acts of aggression with all the hallmarks of war crimes in the Ukrainian Donbas and Syria, and most recently even in the United Kingdom. That is why the decision on the venue of the IPU Assembly has seriously undermined the credibility of the Inter-Parliamentary Union as an organization based on principles and values such as the rule of law, human rights, democracy, the non-use of force or the threat of force — in contravention of international law and the Charter of the United Nations — the non-recognition of territorial acquisitions resulting from the threat or use of force and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of its members. It has also brought into question the IPU's commitment to acting in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The delegation of Ukraine therefore unfortunately has no choice but to dissociate itself from the consensus on General Assembly resolution 72/278, on interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 126?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.